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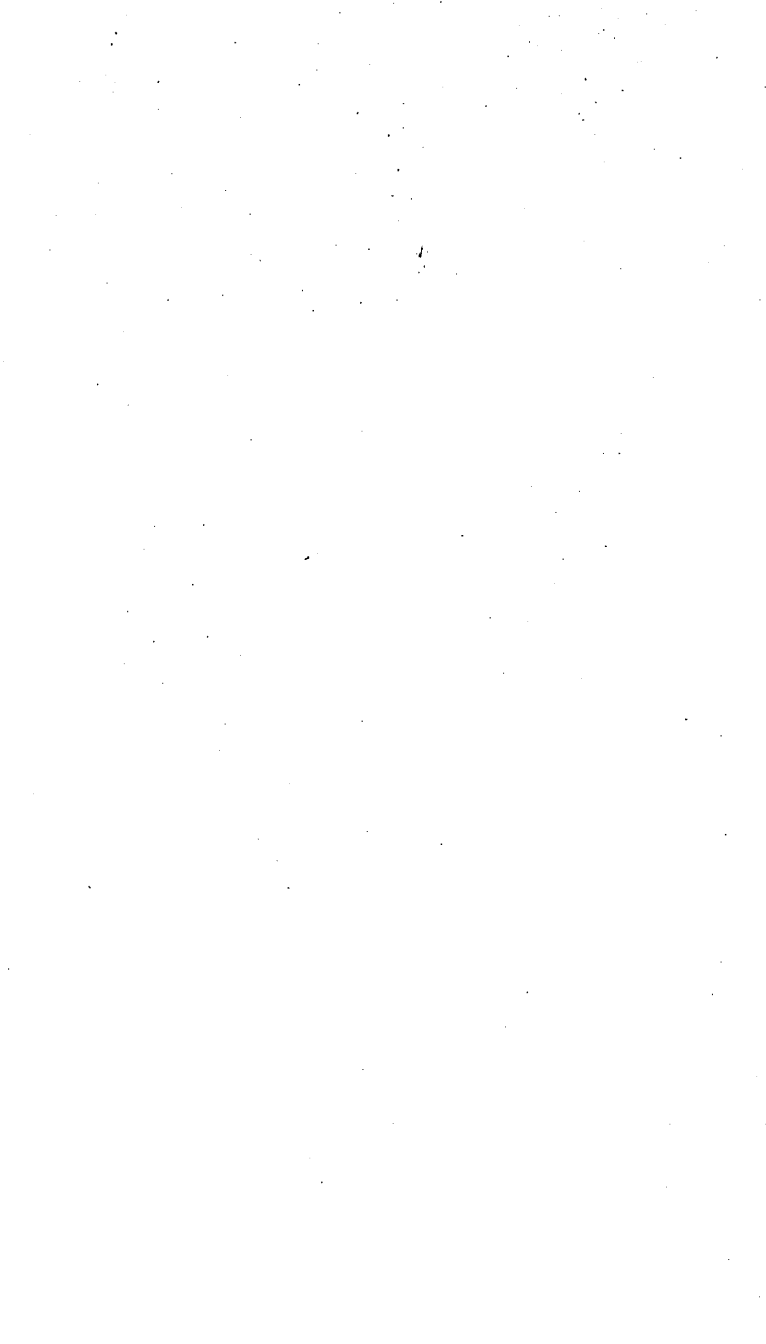
SCIENCE AND CULTURE SERIES

JOSEPH HUSSLEIN, S.J., PH.D., GENERAL EDITOR





## **THE GOSPEL GUIDE**







*The*  
**GOSPEL GUIDE**



**A PRACTICAL INTRODUCTION  
TO THE GOSPELS     •     •     •**

*By*

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## PREFACE BY THE GENERAL EDITOR

On the part of the author the primary object of the present volume has been to supply a greatly needed college text for religion classes in our many institutions of higher learning.

But the book answers another purpose as well. It is a compendium of information regarding the Sacred Scriptures in general and the Holy Gospels in particular. As such, it will be found highly serviceable as a reference work for everyone. Not only will priests, religious, and teachers wish to have it close at hand, but it should prove no less desirable an addition to the family bookshelf.

At the present writing the author of *THE GOSPEL GUIDE* has for more than six years been engaged as Professor of Sacred Scripture at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary, Mundelein, Illinois. The first draft of his book, circulated for several years in mimeographed form, has already been successfully used in various institutions of higher learning. The copious additions and emendations made since then have, in large measure, been the direct result of classroom experience.

Valuable suggestions, too, have been received from competent Scripture scholars both here and in the Eternal City. These influences together have given the book that form and substance which best adapt it for a college text and render it no less serviceable for private reference and study.

Parts One and Two, dealing respectively with the general introduction to the Bible and the specific introduction to the Gospels, will suffice for the first semester of a college

course. The second term could well be taken up with Part Three, the Exegesis of the Gospels, carrying us from the Prologue of St. John and the Birth of Christ, to the Savior's Resurrection and Ascension. The book is admirably comprehensive, clear, and orderly, so that a vast amount of highly important information has been condensed into a relatively small space. Not only is the positive doctrine of the Church expounded, but the arguments and objections of higher critics and other opponents are pithily summarized and answered with finality and dispatch.

This quality renders the book equally valuable for the general reader, who not merely loves to receive his learning in compact form, but cannot possibly hope to grapple with the vast Scripture literature of our day.

A sense of helplessness, indeed, possesses one as he stands in the great library hall of the Pontifical Biblical Institute at Rome, and gazes upward at the tiers of shelves filled exclusively with Scripture literature. "How," he asks himself, "can any man, in a single lifetime, master all this?" The truth is that he cannot.

This fact still more profoundly impresses on us the value of a volume that brings within the reach of all whatsoever is most fundamental and important in a knowledge of the Holy Gospels, while at the same time giving us the broad background of general Scripture information regarding the Biblical canons, the original texts and apocryphal writings, the translations, the senses in which the Scriptures may be understood, and the rules of interpretation.

It is in the Gospels, to which we are thus scientifically introduced, that we come into most intimate contact with the life, words, and works of our Divine Savior, in Whom, as Pope Benedict XV expressed it, every page of the Old and the New Testament centers.<sup>1</sup>

"When I read the Gospel and find there testimonies from

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. Encyclical Letter of Pope Benedict XV on St. Jerome and Holy Scripture.

the Law and from the Prophets, I see only Christ," St. Jerome wrote long ago. And he proceeds to explain: "I so see Moses and the Prophets that I understand them of Christ. Then when I come to the splendor of Christ Himself, and when I gaze at that glorious sunlight, I care not to look at the lamplight. For what light can a lamp give when lit in the daytime? If the sun shines out the lamplight does not show. So, too, when Christ is present, the Law and the Prophets do not show. Not that I would detract from the Law and the Prophets; rather do I praise them in that they show forth Christ. But I so read the Law and the Prophets as not to abide in them but from them to pass to Christ."<sup>2</sup>

Hence, in the four Gospels he can find nothing which does not illumine the world with its radiance, so that for this great Doctor of the Church even things that in the Sacred Books might seem to men trifling and unimportant shine "with the majesty of the Holy Spirit."<sup>3</sup>

With that same deep appreciation the Church would have us enter upon the study to which the present volume is a practical introduction. "Our one desire for all the Church's children," wrote Pope Benedict XV, "is that, being saturated with the Bible, they may arrive at the all-surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ."<sup>4</sup>

JOSEPH HUSSLEIN, S.J., PH.D.

St. Louis University,  
November 25, 1931.

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<sup>2</sup>*Tract. in Marcum*, ix. 1-7.

<sup>3</sup>*In Ezech.* i. 15.

<sup>4</sup>*Op. cit.*



## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The purpose of this book is to provide a text on the Gospels for use in colleges to supplement the customary courses in Religion. It has been felt that while the student is offered satisfactory courses in Apologetics and Dogma the field of Scripture has been comparatively neglected. These other courses necessarily draw to a considerable extent on the sacred books and explain passages of doctrinal importance, but such treatment does not give the student real acquaintance with the distinctive field of Scriptural studies.

This field has already received recognition of a sort in the college curriculum, and such texts as that of the late Archbishop Messmer have done good service, but something approaching a more comprehensive treatment, especially in exegesis, is still demanded. The present book attempts to supply that need in regard to the Gospels.

Though the goal is a proper understanding of the sacred text, the direct study of the text must be preceded by a consideration of the topics usually classed as "Introduction." No important topic peculiar to Scripture has been omitted; yet, owing to the brevity demanded by the college curriculum, only the barest outline has been supplied. General notions bearing on the whole Bible have been included in the introduction for the benefit of those students who will not again come into contact with Scriptural courses at college. Where special courses in these matters are provided, the parts concerning the Old Testament can be dropped.

Direct handling of the Gospel text is considered essential. Were it possible without making the book too bulky, the

Gospels would have been printed as an appendix; as it is, a copy of the Gospels should be used along with the text-book. References to the Gospels are given before each section of exegesis. Only after having read the Gospel passages will the student be prepared for a study of the explanation. This explanation is brief and for the most part aims only at tracing the main current of the narrative and at clearing up obscurities; hence, much is passed over by the author on the understanding that the reading of the Gospel text has made the ideas familiar or else that the matter has been handled sufficiently in one of the other courses in Religion. Some passages, such as the "Sermon on the Mount," have been treated rather extensively and out of due proportion with the text, but this was done partly because of their importance and partly also because of the advantage of giving the student some acquaintance with such detailed work.

Enough material has been included to occupy the amount of time generally allotted to a Religion course in one year of college, but it is taken for granted that teachers will omit or expand various sections to meet the special requirements of their classes. Since ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ, as St. Jerome puts it, and since the Church has always urged her children to study this treasury of divine revelation, there is no call for a defense of the attention given the Bible in Catholic education. It is hoped that this book will assist those who are trying to promote the proper Scripture study in our colleges.



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**PART ONE**  
**GENERAL INTRODUCTION**



## Chapter I

### THE BIBLE IN GENERAL

1. *The name.* Our term "Bible" is derived from the Latin *biblia*, *bibliae* meaning "book." It is aptly applied to the Bible as the book above all other books, since its divine character places it on a height unattainable by any merely human composition.

An older Latin form in the neuter plural is *biblia*, *biblicorum*, formed from the Greek neuter plural τὰ βιβλία. Other names for the Bible are Scripture (literally "written" or "the writing"), the Scriptures, Sacred or Holy Scripture, Holy Writ, the Holy Book, and the Holy Books.

2. *The number of books in the Bible.* The Bible is made up of many distinct compositions, and hence we speak of the various books of the Bible. According to the enumeration of the Council of Trent (Denz. 784) there are forty-five books in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament, making a total of seventy-two books in the whole Bible.

Sometimes the number of books in the Old Testament is reduced to forty-four, the prophet Baruch being counted as part of the prophet Jeremias; again, the Lamentations of Jeremias are at times counted as distinct from his prophecies, and this raises the total to forty-six.

The Jews exclude seven of the books of the Old Testament (cf. § 18) and by counting two or more books as one, reach a total of twenty-two or twenty-four or twenty-seven. The number twenty-four, which has been in use since the third or fourth century, is obtained by grouping the books as follows:

Five books of the Law (our Pentateuch);

Four books of the earlier prophets (Josue, Judges, Samuel, Kings);

Four books of the later prophets (Isaias, Ezechiel, Jeremias, and the twelve minor prophets taken as one book);

Eleven books called "writings" (Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Canticle, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Esdras with Nehemias, and Paralipomenon).

### 3. *The arrangement of the books in the Bible.*

Our English and Latin editions of the Bible print the books in the order in which they were enumerated in the decree of the Council of Trent. In this enumeration the books were grouped partly according to their subject matter and partly according to the time when they were written. This gave the following arrangement of the books:

#### A. **In the Old Testament**

Nineteen historical books arranged according to the time of the events narrated, though Tobias, Judith, and Esther are placed after the others because they contain only single episodes — Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Josue, Judges, Ruth, Kings (4), Paralipomenon (2), Esdras (2), Tobias, Judith, Esther.

Seven didactic books in the supposed order of their composition — Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticle of Canticles, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus.

Seventeen prophetic books, the four major prophets (and Baruch) being placed first, and then the twelve minor prophets but without strict attention to the order of their composition — Isaias, Jeremias with Lamentations and Baruch, Ezechiel, Daniel; Osee, Joel, Amos, Abdias, Jonas, Micheas, Nahum, Habacuc, Sophonias, Aggeus, Zacharias, Malachias.

Two books of the Machabees.

#### B. **In the New Testament**

Five historical books — the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles.

Twenty-one Epistles — St. Paul to the Romans, the Corinthians (2), the Galatians, the Ephesians, the Philip-pians, the Colossians, the Thessalonians (2), Timothy (2), Titus, Philemon, the Hebrews; St. James, St. Peter (2), St. John (3), St. Jude.

One prophetical book — the Apocalypse.

4. *Various names for some of the books.* The first five books are usually given separate names — Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Often they are grouped as the Five Books of Moses or the Pentateuch (from the Greek *τεῦχος*, meaning a volume or a book in the form of a roll). The Jews called them the Law (*Tora*) and distinguished them by the first word or words of each book.

Other variants are: The four books of Kings or the first and second book of Samuel and the first and second book of Kings; Paralipomenon or Chronicles; Second Esdras or Nehemias; Proverbs or Parabolae (Trent); Ecclesiastes or Qoheleth (i.e., probably "The Preacher"); Ecclesiasticus or Sirach; the Apocalypse of St. John or the Revelation of St. John (Protestants); Lamentations is often considered as a part of Jeremias.

## Chapter II

### INSPIRATION

5. *The word of God.* The Bible is the written word of God. Each and every one of its books was written through the inspiration of God and consequently God Himself is the primary Author. It is inspiration that gives the Bible its unique character and sets it immeasurably above all merely human books. Because of this direct dependence on God, the Bible is called holy, sacred, divinely inspired.

6. *The fact of inspiration.* The first point to be determined is whether the Bible is actually inspired. This is not the same as the question of the Canon, which will be discussed later. Here the idea is general and consists in considering whether without inquiring into the claims of the individual books, it can be asserted that the Bible was written under this special divine influence.

Proofs for the fact of inspiration are found partly in Holy Scripture itself and partly in ecclesiastical tradition.

A. **Proofs from Scripture.** In the New Testament, Christ and the Apostles repeatedly approve the current belief in the divine origin and authority of the Old Testament. "And the Pharisees being gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying: What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He? They say to Him: David's. He saith to them: How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying: The Lord said to My Lord, Sit on My right hand, until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son?" (Matt. 22, 41-45.) "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe, if one rise again from the dead" (Luke 16, 31). "The Son of Man indeed goeth, as it is written of Him. . . . All you shall be scan-



dalized in Me this night. For it is written: I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed. . . . How then shall the scripture be fulfilled, that so it must be done?" (Matt. 26, 24.31.54.) "Then Jesus took unto Him the twelve, and said to them: Behold, we go to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man" (Luke 18, 31). "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures, the things that were concerning Him" (Luke 24, 27). "Search the Scriptures, for you think in them to have life everlasting; and the same are they that give testimony of Me. . . . There is one that accuseth you, Moses, in whom you trust. For if you did believe Moses, you would perhaps believe Me also; for he wrote of Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" (John 5, 39-47.) "Jesus answered them: Is it not written in your law: I said you are gods? If he called them gods, to whom the word of God was spoken, and the Scripture cannot be broken; do you say of Him Whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world: Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?" (John 10, 34-36.)

"Men, brethren, the Scripture must needs be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas" (Acts 1, 16). "(Lord) Who, by the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of our father David, Thy servant, hast said: Why did the Gentiles rage, and the people mediate vain things" (Acts 4, 25). "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God justifieth the Gentiles by faith, told unto Abraham before: In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gal. 3, 8). "All Scripture, inspired of God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice" (2 Tim. 3, 16). "Understanding this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is made by private interpretation. For prophecy came not by the will of man at any time; but the holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1, 20.21).

These texts show the absolute authority of the Scripture, since what it says must be accepted by all as true (Matt. 22, 41-45), its divine origin (Acts 1, 16; 4, 25), and the special nature of the divine influence exerted on the sacred writers (2 Tim. 3, 16; 2 Pet. 1, 20.21).

In 2 Tim. 3, 16, St. Paul is speaking of the entire Old Testament; in the preceding verse he says Timothy has known the Holy Scriptures from his infancy; though Timothy's father was a Gentile, his mother was a Jewish woman and it was evidently by her that he was instructed (Acts 16, 1). The Greek word here used by St. Paul (*θεόπνευστος*) is not found anywhere else in the Bible, but it is used by profane writers to mean that a thing was due to divine power in such a way that it had to be attributed principally to God and not to human agents. From St. Paul, Christian writers, both Greek and Latin, took over the use of this term as applied to the Scriptures, and always in the sense of "divinely inspired."

In 2 Pet. 1, 20, there is a fuller description of the nature of this divine influence. In the preceding verses St. Peter had spoken of having seen the glory of Christ at the Transfiguration. But more reliable even than the evidence of his own eyes is the testimony of the prophetic word found in the Bible; its reliability is based on its origin, for the prophecies are not the result of the natural genius of the prophets, but of the operation of the Holy Ghost. "Interpretation" may possibly be taken to refer to the explanation of the prophecy, but this leads to the same meaning, for St. Peter then says the prophecies cannot be rightly interpreted without the aid of the Holy Ghost because, having impelled the prophets to speak as they did, He is the real author of their prophecies. St. Peter is speaking about the written prophecies as found in the Scriptures, and not about the mere spoken words of the prophets, for his purpose is to exhort the Christians to pay proper attention to this testimony which they have in the Scriptures. Nor does he

restrict this to the books of the Bible which are usually called prophetic; in addressing the people, St. Peter appeals to prophecies in these other books (Acts 1, 16; 2, 25; 3, 22).

The inspiration of the New Testament follows from the fact that it is placed on the same level as the Old. St. Paul seems to link together quotations from the Old and the New Testaments with the formula "the Scripture saith," and to argue from them as of equal divine authority; "For the Scripture saith: Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn: and the laborer is worthy of his reward" (1 Tim. 5, 18; cf. Deut. 25, 4 and Luke 10, 7). St. Peter classes the Epistles of St. Paul with "the other Scriptures"; though we cannot tell how many of St. Paul's Epistles he refers to, still he here marks at least some of them as inspired; "And account the long-suffering of our Lord, salvation; as also our most dear brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, hath written you; as also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are certain things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction" (2 Pet. 3, 15.16).

**B. Proofs from tradition.** Tradition is quite clear on the inspiration of the Scriptures. The early Fathers affirm that they were written by the Holy Ghost or through the operation of the Holy Ghost, and they call them the letter of God sent to men or given by God to men; they explain that in composing them the human writers were the instruments of God (e.g., Theophilus of Antioch, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Cyprian, Athenagoras, Hippolytus, Athanasius, Augustine, Gregory the Great). The earliest official documents speak of the Bible as "the Divine Scripture" (Councils of Hippo, 393, and Carthage, 397 and 419) and of God as its author (Council of Constantinople, 533). In the Council of Florence, 1441, God is called the author of Scripture because the human writers of both Testaments spoke "*eodem Spiritu Sancto inspirante*" (Denz.

706). The Council of Trent and the Vatican Council repeat the same idea (Denz. 783, 1787, 1809). In more recent papal pronouncements the inspiration of Scripture is held as a certain dogma of faith (*Providentissimus Deus*, Denz. 1941; *Pascendi*, Denz. 2090; *Spiritus Paraclitus*, Denz. 2186):

**7. *The nature of inspiration.*** Each of the sacred books has two authors, God and the human writer. The relation between the two is that of principal cause and instrumental cause, God being the principal cause and man the instrumental. This may be illustrated, though very imperfectly, by the example of a man writing with a pen; the man is the principal cause of what is written, the pen is the instrumental cause; both work in harmony to form the letters and the words. But this illustration is imperfect, for in the production of an inspired book the instrument used by God is a man, and that man acts with his human faculties of intelligence and free will.

But how did God use man as His instrument in the writing of the sacred books? The explanation is given concisely by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical *Providentissimus Deus*. "For, by supernatural power, He [God] so moved and impelled them to write. He was so present to them that the things which He ordered, and those only, they first rightly understood, then willed faithfully to write down, and finally expressed in apt words and with infallible truth" (Denz. 1952).

In this explanation we may distinguish four elements: (a) The things written were those, and those only, which God ordered to be written; hence, God determined the subject matter. (b) The intellect of the human writer was illuminated by supernatural light so that he understood these things as matter to be written. (c) His will was moved by the divine influence so that he resolved to write these things faithfully. (d) In the act of writing he was assisted by God so that he selected words fitted to express these things with infallible truth.

The illumination of the intellect need not include revelation. The writer may already have all the needed knowledge or be able to acquire it by his own efforts; inspiration then enables him to recognize this material as something to be written and, if need be, assists him in collecting it. But where supernatural mysteries or truths entirely unknown are to be handled, inspiration includes the revelation of these matters to the writer.

The divine influence on the will is such that the writer wills to put down precisely those things which God wishes written. Nothing will be written against God's will, and nothing will be omitted that God wishes to have included. The writer is not deprived of his free will, but his will is directed so that it corresponds with the divine will. There is nothing to prevent this divine movement of the will from being preceded or accompanied by other influences urging the writer toward the same end; tradition says that St. Mark and St. John were asked by the disciples to write their respective Gospels; in these and similar instances divine grace seconded that which was proposed by other motives.

The actual composition of the book must also be controlled by God to secure not only the inclusion of the matter God wishes included and the exclusion of all else, but also the proper expression of the matter so that the expression itself, though perhaps not the best or most literary, is always such as to convey the truth intended by God. At times this may amount to the supplying of the exact words if, as in mysteries, the writer is unable to find the proper expression for himself; in general, however, inspiration simply insures such divine guidance in selecting the expressions as will prevent the choosing of erroneous or unsuitable forms. Many have advocated what is called "verbal inspiration"; the older form in which this meant the mechanical dictation of the words to the writer has long since been abandoned, but of late favor has been shown it in another form which is less mechanical and is based on God's coöperation with all the

faculties of the inspired writer in the actual work of writing his book.

8. ***The extent of inspiration.*** Inspiration extends to everything written down originally by the human author. During all the time of his writing he was under this special divine influence, and everything he wrote is inspired. If later on, others made mistakes in copying his book, these mistakes, of course, would not be his works and so would not be inspired.

A. **The infallible truth of the Bible.** All error is excluded from the Bible because it has God as its principal Author; if it contained error, God Himself would be responsible for that error, but this is impossible on account of His infinite wisdom and truthfulness. Hence, everything in the original books is infallibly true. Care must be taken, however, in determining just what the sacred writer says; the following points may be noted:

a) All direct assertions of the writer are true;  
b) When he explicitly quotes the words of others with disapproval, their assertions are to be considered false (e.g., in Psalm 13 we read, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God"; this assertion is evidently condemned by the Psalmist and so must be considered false);

c) When he explicitly quotes others with approval, their assertions are true insofar as and in the sense in which they are approved; if a lengthy quotation is given, it is true in its general tenor, though some of the minor points may be false since they need not come under the approbation given to the quotation as a whole;

d) When he explicitly quotes without approval or disapproval, then it is true merely that these assertions were made by the person or persons to whom he attributes them;

e) When he writes in a poetical manner, his work is to be judged by the rules of poetry where everything is not to be taken literally;

f) When he describes physical phenomena, he may be supposed to do so according to the way they strike the senses and not according to strictly scientific requirements;

g) When he narrates historical events, he must be supposed to give them substantially as they actually occurred.

**B. A modern controversy.** Toward the close of the nineteenth century the attacks made upon the inerrancy of the Bible by rationalists induced some Catholic scholars to formulate theories restricting inspiration to certain parts of the Scriptures, in order to meet more easily the objections brought forward especially from history and the natural sciences. The resultant controversy among Catholics was closed by the encyclical *Providentissimus Deus*, issued by Pope Leo XIII on November 18, 1893 (Denz. 1941).

In 1880, Lenormant defended the theory that inspiration was restricted to matters of faith and morals; in historical matters the sacred writers not only might make mistakes, but in reality had often done so; the historical portions of the Old Testament contained many fables, legends, and myths. His book was placed on the Index. W. Clifford, in the *Dublin Review*, 1881, advanced the opinion that the first chapter of Genesis was a liturgical hymn of the Jews; Cardinal Newman, in the *Nineteenth Century*, 1884, seemed to exclude the so-called "*obiter dicta*" from inspiration; Berta, in 1892, admitted scientific errors in the Bible, while Semeria, in 1893, held that there was an uninspired element in the Scriptures. The controversy among Catholics became acute with the publication of Monsignor d'Hulst's "La Question Biblique" in the *Correspondant*, 1893; although he professed to be merely giving a summary of the state of the controversy, he placed more emphasis on the arguments favoring the restriction of inspiration than on those against it. He distinguished three schools among Catholics—the Right, the Left, and the Center; the Right held strictly to the traditional view that inspiration extended to everything in the Bible; the Left, the Liberal School, was ready to

admit errors in the Bible; the Center in theory conceded the possibility of errors but in practice observed the greatest reserve. Loisy shortly afterwards granted that the whole of Scripture was inspired, but asserted that this did not exclude all error since the truth of Scripture was relative to the times in which the books were written.

9. ***Truth of the inspired Scriptures.*** The encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* aimed at promoting Biblical studies among Catholics and at setting forth clearly the Catholic principles on the extent of inspiration. There is no possibility of restricting inspiration; the whole Bible is inspired and consequently all error is necessarily excluded from it. Conflict between the theologian and the scientist is impossible as long as each keeps within his proper limits; whatever science truly demonstrates must be shown to be in harmony with the Scriptures, while theories contrary to the Scriptures must be held to be false. But the sacred writers did not intend to present the inmost nature of things in the visible world and so they made use of popular expressions which are based on the way things strike the senses. When scientists leave their own proper field to indulge in philosophy, their opinions are to be refuted by philosophy. Historical matters often involve difficulties, but in no case can the sacred writer be accused of error. The difficulty may have been created by some defect in the copying of the manuscripts of the Bible; still such defects in the text are not to be admitted except on real proof.

A. **False theories.** Loisy openly opposed the teaching contained in the encyclical, but tried to appear orthodox by claiming that a thing might be historically untrue and yet be theologically true. But for most Catholic scholars the main points of the controversy were considered settled, though some suspicious theories were still advanced. Chief among these theories was the claim that the encyclical, besides granting that the sacred writers described natural phenomena according to their appearances, permitted the



same principle to be transferred to history. This and similar theories were condemned in the encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus*, September 15, 1920 (Denz. 2186).

### Chapter III

## THE CANON OF THE BIBLE

10. *Meaning of "Canon."* From about the fourth century the term "canon" has been used to signify the list or collection of the inspired books. A book on this list or in this collection is said to be "canonical" or "in the canon," and thereby it is marked as having been properly recognized as an inspired book.

11. *Derivation.* The primary meaning of the term "canon" is "a rule" or "a measure" such as is used in measuring material objects. This meaning was readily extended so as to include any sort of measure or norm. In the early Fathers the doctrine handed down by the Apostles was called the "canon of tradition" or the "canon of truth" or the "canon of faith." Soon the term was applied to the sacred books containing this doctrine, and so arose the present meaning, "the list or collection of the inspired books."

12. *Difference between the terms "inspired" and "canonical."* A book is inspired because it comes from God as its author; it is canonical because it has been delivered to the Church as inspired and has been recognized as such by the Church. Hence, to the idea contained in "inspired," the term "canonical" adds the idea "properly recognized as such." By placing a book in the canon the Church does not make it an inspired book, but simply gives official recognition to the fact that the author was inspired in writing that book.

13. *Protocanonical and deuterocanonical books.* Some of the sacred books were recognized as inspired from the beginning; these are called "protocanonical books," i.e., "books in the first canon." Others received this recog-

dition only after a period of doubt concerning their inspiration, and so they are called "deuterocanonical books," i.e., "books in the second canon." This does not imply any higher or lower grade of divine authority; it simply calls attention to the historical fact that for a while some books were not recognized as canonical in some particular churches.

In the Old Testament the deuterocanonical parts are: Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, the two books of the Machabees, and the portions of Esther and Daniel found in Greek text but not in the Hebrew (Esther 10, 4-16, 24; Dan. 3, 24-90; 13, 1-14, 42).

In the New Testament they are: the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of St. James, the second Epistle of St. Peter, the second and third Epistles of St. John, the Epistle of St. Jude, and the Apocalypse. Modern textual criticism has called into question certain passages in the Gospels and these are sometimes improperly classed as deuterocanonical; the passages are: Mark 16, 9-20; Luke 22, 43-44; John 5, 3-4; 7, 53-8, 11.

The deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament are called "Apocrypha" by Protestants, who give the name "Pseudepigrapha" to the books which Catholics call "Apocrypha" (see § 19).

14. *The criterion of the canon.* Apostolic tradition is the criterion to be used in deciding what books are to be included in the canon, and the only one to apply this criterion is the Church, the divinely appointed custodian of the tradition of the Apostles. The reason for this is evident; for inspiration is a supernatural fact and consequently can be known only through revelation. Inspiration is an act of God and He alone knows this work of His. If He wishes a book to be recognized as inspired, He must make known the fact that it is inspired. This revelation is handed down in apostolic tradition; the Apostles received the revelation from Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost, and

they and their successors handed it down to succeeding generations. In this matter the authority of the Jewish synagogue amounts to nothing for us; whatever had been previously revealed by God about the inspiration of the books had to be confirmed and completed for the Apostles through Christ and the Holy Ghost, and then handed down to later times through the Church. Hence, the Church alone has the power to decide whether a book is inspired; her criterion in making her decision is apostolic tradition; all other criteria are false or insufficient or incapable of being reduced to apostolic tradition.

**A. Rejected criteria:** The following proposed criteria must be rejected:

a) The fact that a book was accepted as inspired by one or two Churches or by some of the ancient Fathers is not sufficient. This acceptance does show the existence of a local tradition, but since it is only the Universal Church which is infallible, this local tradition must be compared with the tradition of other churches, especially the important ones founded by the Apostles.

b) The supreme excellence and mutual agreement of the books cannot be taken as revealing their inspiration, for the doctrine of uninspired books may be excellent and, if orthodox, must be in agreement with the Scriptures.

c) The effect produced on the reader, or the internal testimony of the Holy Ghost (Calvin's theory), and Luther's theory of agreement with his doctrine of justification must be rejected since they are purely subjective.

d) The character of the writer cannot suffice, for though he may have been holy and called even to the office of prophet or apostle, it still remains to be proved that in this particular writing he was inspired.

e) No merely human testimony is enough, since the fact in question is supernatural and, until revealed, is known only to God.

15. *The canon defined by the Church.* In 1546 the

Council of Trent published with final authority the canon of the Church for both the Old and the New Testament (Denz. 783, 784). This definition was occasioned by the doctrines of the Protestant reformers who sought to exclude some of the sacred books.

The canon as defined by the Council of Trent was not something new; the same canon had been repeatedly recognized by the Church in official documents which go back as far as the fourth century. The most important of these pronouncements are: Council of Hippo, 393; Council of Carthage, 397 (Denz. 92); the Letter of Pope Innocent I to Exsuperius, 405 (Denz. 96); the decree of Pope Gelasius, 495 (Denz. 162); the Council of Florence, 1441 (Denz. 706). In 1870 the Vatican Council reaffirmed the canon of Trent (Denz. 1787).

16. *The Protestant canon.* Without an authoritative teaching body there can be no question of a canon in the strict sense of the term, and the principle of private interpretation which lies at the heart of Protestantism does away with the recognition of an authoritative teaching body. But from the beginning of Protestantism individuals or groups tried to set up a canon of the Bible; they followed one or more of the false criteria mentioned before. After long discussions and through varying changes, Protestants in general recognized a canon which excluded the deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament.

17. *Rationalists and the canon.* Inspiration has been denied by modern rationalism since nothing supernatural can be admitted by a rationalist. For them the Bible is only a human work, the literature of a nation. Hence, there can be no question of a real canon; each critic accepts or rejects books according to his own private judgment on their critical or historical value.

18. *History of the canon.* Since the Universal Church has pronounced upon the canon, the question is closed; we know definitely just what books are divinely inspired. It is

eminently useful, however, to investigate the history of the canon. The books of the Bible were written at intervals throughout a period of some fifteen centuries; there could be no possibility of a complete canon till the last of the books had been written. It was natural, too, as the number of inspired books increased, that discussions should arise about the right of various books to be included in the canon. Divine Providence watched over the formation of the canon, but here as elsewhere God chose to act through men and to guide rather than force the order of events. The history of the canon aims at tracing as far as possible the various steps by which the inspired books came to be recognized as such to the exclusion of all other books.

**A. Origin and preservation of the Old Testament.** The books of the Old Testament were written at intervals from the time of Moses (about 1450 B.C.) down to about 100 B.C. They were intrusted to the care of the Jewish authorities, chiefly, if not exclusively, under the guidance of the prophets. With the coming of Christ the authority of the Jewish synagogue came to an end, and He with plenary authority handed over the sacred books to the custody of His newly founded Church. What God had previously revealed about the sacred books was, of course, preserved by Christ, but if any books still remained doubtful, it was His office to settle such doubts. The history of the canon of the Old Testament may then conveniently be divided into two periods, the canon among the Jews and the canon among the Christians.

*a) The canon among the Jews: early indications.* The Old Testament itself is our only source of information about the beginning and early growth of the canon. Though it contains no complete lists of the sacred books, it affords clear indications of the gradual gathering of authoritative collections of these books. The most important of these indications are:

Deut. 31, 9-13. 24-26. Moses wrote the Law and intrusted

the book to the Levites to be kept near the Ark of the Covenant as a testimony.

Josh. 24, 25-27. Josue added further precepts and wrote them in the book of the Law of the Lord.

1 Kings 10, 25. Samuel wrote the Law of the Kingdom and deposited it before the Lord.

4 Kings 22, 3 ff. The high priest Helcias found the book of the Law in the Temple, and King Josias (*ca.* 622 B.C.) renewed the covenant with the Lord (*cf.* 4 Kings 23, 1-3; 2 Par. 34, 29-32).

2 Par. 29, 25-30. King Ezechias ordered the Psalms to be sung in the Temple.

Prov. 25, 1. The same king ordered the Proverbs of Solomon to be collected.

Jer. 26, 17. Jeremias, by referring to Mic. 3, 12, shows that he knew the work of that prophet.

Jer. 36, 1-19, 28-32. Jeremias wrote down his own prophecies.

Dan. 9, 2. Daniel knew from books the number of years from the time when the word of the Lord was made to Jeremias the prophet.

Neh. 8-10. Esdras (*ca.* 444 B.C.) read the Law to the people and they swore to observe it.

2 Mach. 2, 13. Nehemias built a library and gathered the books of the kingdom, of the prophets, and of David, and the letters of the kings about gifts.

2 Mach. 2, 14. Judas Machabeus (166-161 B.C.) collected the books which had been scattered during the war.

Ecclus. 44. The author, Jesus, son of Sirach (*ca.* 200 B.C.), writing about 180 B.C., speaks of the Law and the prophets and some of the writings. His grandson, who translated the book from Hebrew into Greek, likewise speaks, in his Prologue, of the Law, the prophets, and other books.

These testimonies leave no doubt that collections of books regarded as holy were made from the earliest times and carefully preserved.

b) *The canon among the Jews at the beginning of the Christian era.* At this time the Jewish canon contained all the protocanonical books; the Jews outside of Palestine accepted also all the deuterocanonical books; the Jews in Palestine certainly accepted some, and perhaps all, of the deuterocanonical books, but they seem to have looked upon them as still needing some further confirmation. Owing to the lack of historical data pertaining to this period, it is difficult to arrive at a clear idea of the attitude of the Palestinian Jews toward the deuterocanonical books. Once Christianity had arisen and had accepted the complete canon, the unconverted Jews manifested unrestrained hatred of the new religion, and perhaps it was under the influence of this feeling that they excluded the deuterocanonical books from their canon. Whatever the cause, they officially adopted the shorter canon toward the end of the first century of our era (*ca.* A.D. 90). Had the deuterocanonical books been as firmly established in the canon as the others, it is difficult to see how they could have been dropped in this fashion; still this would not have been impossible in view of the confused state of Jewish affairs after the Roman conquest of A.D. 70, and of the great power then exercised in religious matters by the Pharisees who were responsible for the canon then established.

That the Jews outside of Palestine accepted the deuterocanonical books is clear from the fact that these books were included in the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament which, being in Greek, was the text used by the Jews of the Dispersion. It is impossible to suppose that the Jews would have put sacred and profane books together.

That the Jews even in Palestine accepted the deuterocanonical books is highly probable for the following reasons:

The Jews outside Palestine depended in religious matters upon Palestine and would hardly have added to the sacred books on their own authority; if they did make such additions, vehement protests would have been made in Pales-



tine, but we have no trace of such protests during this period. The Septuagint seems to have been honored everywhere among the Jews, but after the later fixing of the canon by the Pharisees this Greek Version was severely condemned and the day of its publication declared a day of mourning.

The book of Baruch seems to have been originally joined with Jeremias, Baruch having been the secretary and disciple of Jeremias; the Greek translation of chapters 29-41 of Jeremias seems to have been made by the translator of Baruch; besides, Baruch was again translated into Greek by Theodotion, a Jewish proselyte who about A.D. 180 undertook a new translation of the Scriptures to offset the supposed errors of the Septuagint.

Tobias and Judith were still used by Jewish commentators long after the beginning of the Christian era.

Ecclesiasticus was cited by later Jewish writers with the formula reserved for citing Scripture ("it is written," etc.).

The fragments of Daniel were in Theodotion, and Josephus used the fragments of Esther and the first book of the Machabees where he professed to be using only sacred books.

*c) The canon of the Old Testament among the Christians.* It is evident that Christ and the Apostles approved the sacred books in general; the point here investigated is whether their approval extended to the deuterocanonical books. Proof that it did is drawn, first, from the New Testament, and second, from tradition.

*From the New Testament.* The Apostles and Evangelists usually quote Scriptural texts from the Septuagint, and that even in places where the Greek text differs from the Hebrew; over three hundred of about three hundred and fifty citations are from the Septuagint. Since the Septuagint contained the deuterocanonical books, this general approval of it must be taken as extending to these books as well as to the others. No trace can be found in the New Testament of any distinction made between the deuterocanonical books

and the protocanonical. Besides, in the Epistles there seem to be many allusions to the deuterocanonical books, especially to Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Tobias, Judith, and the second book of Machabees.

*From tradition.* In consequence of this apostolic approval the Church during the first two centuries accepted the deuterocanonical books just as it did the protocanonical. This holds not merely for one or two localities, but for the Universal Church; extant testimony proves this for Rome (from Clement of Rome, Hermas, Hippolytus, Justin), for Gaul (from Irenæus), for Africa (from Tertullian, Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria), and for the East (from Polycarp, Athanagoras).

*d) Controversy about the deuterocanonical books.* Early in the third century began a period of controversy about the divine authority of the deuterocanonical books, and with varying intensity the controversy continued till about the year 500. Official decisions by the Church in favor of the full canon appeared as early as the Council of Hippo in 393 and these decisions gradually prevailed.

*Causes of the controversy.* The chief cause for doubt concerning these books seems to have been that the early Christian writers used them either very seldom or not at all. They had been forced to act in this way because their controversies were with the Jews who rejected these books; but their attitude toward the deuterocanonical books was later misunderstood and was taken to mean that they too rejected them. Another cause was the appearance of numerous apocryphal works; the suspicion excited by these books extended even to some of the genuine books. Finally, a misunderstanding of Origen's great critical edition of the Septuagint increased the confusion. Origen had placed critical marks on all passages and books not found in the Hebrew text, his purpose being to indicate where the texts differed; but later on, these marks were taken to mean

that such passages or books were not part of the inspired text or at least were of less authority than the rest.

St. Melito is the earliest witness to the controversy (Euseb. *H.E.* IV, 26, 12). He had been asked by Bishop Onesimus for an exact account of the number and order of the books of the Old Testament; in reply (about A.D. 160-180) St. Melito sent a list containing only the protocanonical books (though for some unknown reason he omitted also the book of Esther). The explanation for this curtailed canon is furnished by Eusebius in his declaration that St. Melito gave merely those books which were then received by all as inspired. This merely proves that in the East, where St. Melito had carried on his investigations about the canon, doubts were prevalent concerning the deuterocanonical books. Some have claimed that St. Melito wished to show what books could be used in discussions with the Jews and that consequently he drew up simply the canon of books acknowledged by the Jews, but the evidence for this claim is hardly convincing.

Origen accepted all the books, but he makes it clear that some of them were doubted by many; hence he calls the book of Wisdom "Scripture" but not canonical because some reject it. This seems to have been the attitude of those Fathers of this period who give the shorter canon (SS. Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory Nazianzen, Hilary); though they omit the deuterocanonical books from their lists, they cite them as Scripture in their other writings and distinguish them from the "Apocrypha."

The opinion of St. Jerome has been variously interpreted. Living for a long time in the East, where the doubts about the deuterocanonical books were strong, and perhaps influenced by his respect for the *veritas hebraica*, he seems to have looked upon these books as uninspired. Still he quotes them as Scripture with great frequency, perhaps in deference to the well-known position of the Western Churches,

but he does not consider them as of sufficient authority to establish dogmatic proofs. His influence was felt strongly in the West, especially in the period of the scholastics, with the result that while the inspiration of the books was generally acknowledged, some regarded them as of less authority than the protocanonical books.

**B. Origin and history of the New Testament canon.** Like the books of the Old Testament, those of the New were written at various times, though here the period of their composition was not so extensive. The first Gospel was published shortly after the year A.D. 40, while the last book of the New Testament, the Gospel according to St. John, appeared between the years A.D. 90 and 100. Preaching, not writing, was the means adopted for spreading the doctrine of Christ; but as need arose or occasion offered, the Gospels and Epistles were written and delivered to the different Christian communities for which they were especially composed. Of necessity, then, time was required before any community could have a complete collection of these books, especially in the age when both traveling and the copying of books were slow and difficult.

a) *Early collections of the books.* Since the subjects dealt with in the Gospels and Epistles were of general interest and utility, the different Churches would naturally preserve with care whatever they possessed of these writings and would be eager to secure others. They showed this care and eagerness in regard to the writings of the early Fathers, for St. Polycarp records that the Church at Philippi collected the writings of St. Ignatius Martyr, while Dionysius of Corinth tells us that the Corinthians were accustomed to read in public their letter from Clement of Rome. The writings of the Apostles and Evangelists would certainly be even more highly esteemed and more eagerly desired.

Indications of early collections are to be found in the New Testament itself:

Some of the Epistles were destined directly for many

of the Churches. The Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians was intended not only for the Church at Corinth but for all the Churches in the province of Achaia: *Paul . . . to the Church of God that is at Corinth, with all the Saints that are in all Achaia* (2 Cor. 1, 1). The Epistles of St. Peter and St. James have an even wider destination: *Peter . . . to the strangers dispersed through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia* (1 Pet. 1, 1); *James . . . to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad* (Jas. 1, 1). One church is even told to share its letter with another: *And when this Epistle shall have been read with you, cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans; and that you read that which is of the Laodiceans* (Col. 1, 16).

At times the sacred writers suppose their readers to be in possession of other New Testament books. St. Peter evidently takes it for granted that his readers are acquainted with the Epistles of St. Paul; *And account the long-suffering of our Lord salvation, as also our most dear brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, hath written to you: As also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which [Epistles] are certain things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction* (2 Pet. 3, 15, 16). The Gospel of St. John was written to complete the other Gospels and to prevent errors that might arise from misunderstanding them; hence these other Gospels must have been widely known.

b) *Canon of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* (to A.D. 150). This period furnished no lists of the books received as inspired; the canon as it existed among these disciples and immediate successors of the Apostles must then be determined merely by examining their writings for references and allusions to the New Testament. This examination shows that they used all the books except four (Philem., 2, 3 John, and Jude) or perhaps five, since the allusions to 2 Peter are not certain. It would be a mistake,

however, to conclude that they rejected these books, for comparatively few of their writings have been preserved and, besides, the Epistles to which no allusion can be found are short and of minor importance in their dogmatic contents.

These early writers place the books of the New Testament on the same level as those of the Old. They cite both with the formulas reserved for the divine books, "it is written," "the Scripture says," and frequently link together texts from both Testaments. "The Gospels and the Apostles," a general term for the New Testament, is often joined with "the Law and the Prophets," a similar term for the Old Testament.

Despite the brevity of these early documents, allusions in them to the New Testament are numerous. Funk gives the following summary of allusions in the more important: Twenty-four in the Epistle of Barnabas; thirty-eight in Clement of Rome; thirty-four in Ignatius Martyr; sixty-six in Polycarp; thirty-nine in the Epistle to Diognetus.

c) *The canon of the New Testament from A.D. 150 to 300.* For this period the evidence is abundant, and discussions directly about the canon are held. Complete uniformity is lacking, but the canon is gradually fixed. For convenience the chief divisions of Christendom may be considered separately.

In the Church at Rome all the books were received except Hebrews and 2 Peter. The chief source is the Fragment of Muratori which dates from about A.D. 170.

In the Church in Africa all were received except Hebrews, James, and 2 Peter. The evidence is chiefly from Cyprian and Tertullian; the latter adds that Hebrews is received by many Churches.

In the Church in Gaul all were received except Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, and Jude. Irenæus is the chief witness.

In the Church at Alexandria all were received. Clement of Alexandria and Origen are the principal witnesses.

The heretic Marcion (about A.D. 140) acknowledged as inspired only the Gospel of St. Luke and ten of the Epistles of St. Paul. He was severely condemned by the writers of this period, especially by St. Irenæus and Tertullian who appeal to the traditions of the Apostles against such innovations. Modern rationalists have tried to represent the canon of Marcion as the first attempt to draw up a list of the inspired books; in reality, Marcion merely selected from the canon already in existence, and his rejection of books universally received at the time and long before him raised a storm of opposition against him. The only influence that can be said to have been exerted by his canon was that it caused greater care to be taken in marking off the inspired books from all others.

Eusebius, the historian of the Church, summarized the testimony from the Fathers of the third century (*H. E.* III, 25). He gives, as received by all, the protocanonical books, and, with the qualification "if it seem good," the Apocalypse; he gives, as received by most, the other deutero-canonical books. Then he mentions other writings which are not received in the Church or which were received for a while by some, and here again he places the Apocalypse with the same qualifications as before, "if it seem good." Finally he mentions certain heretical books as never having been received in the Church.

In this summary the only canonical book left doubtful is the Apocalypse. The strange point is that Eusebius seems unable to classify it according to his own divisions. As a historian, recording the teachings of the writers of the second century and the first part of the third, he felt compelled to place the Apocalypse in the class of books received by all since no one doubted it at that time; but doubts about it arose later, and in recording recent opinion Eusebius felt compelled to class it with those books which had been once received by some and later rejected.

Light is thrown on the controversy prevailing in his day

by the fact that in the third century certain heretics, the Chiliasts who looked for the millenium, tried to support their errors by appealing to the Apocalypse; Dionysius of Alexandria (265) made the mistake of trying to refute them by denying that the Apocalypse was the work of St. John. Dionysius found no supporters at Alexandria, but some of the other oriental churches adopted his views and carried them further by denying that the Apocalypse was inspired. This explains the hesitation of Eusebius in classifying it.

d) *The canon of the New Testament after A.D. 300.* In the Western Churches all were received; the chief witnesses are Jerome, Rufinus, Augustine. The series of ecclesiastical decisions enumerated here under number 15 removed all doubt.

In the Eastern Churches controversy continued for a while, especially in regard to the Apocalypse; but Alexandria retained the complete canon, and before the seventh century all, except the heretical Nestorians, accepted all the deuterocanonical books.

The following diagram illustrates the history of the New Testament canon. The sign “\*” means that the book is received as inspired, the sign “—” that it is not received, and the sign “?” used with one or the other shows that the evidence is not clear.

		Heb.	Jas.	2 Pet.	2.3 John	Jude	Apoc.
To 150	Apostolic Fathers	*	*	—?	—	—	*
150-300	Church at Rome	—	*	—?	*	*	*
	Church in Africa	—?	—?	—	—?	*	*
	Church in Gaul	—	—	—	*	—	*
	Church at Alexandria	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Eusebius	*	*	*	*	*	*?
300, etc.	In the West	*	*	*	*	*	*
	In the East (after 600)	*	*	*	*	*	*

The only remaining element of controversy was that some



as late as Cajetan (1534) attributed less authority to the deuterocanonical books, though they acknowledged that they were inspired.

19. ***The Apocrypha or Apocryphal books.*** An apocryphal book is one which, because of its title or contents, claimed divine authority or was accepted by some as inspired, but was excluded from the canon by the Universal Church. The titles often bore the name of a patriarch, prophet, or Apostle, as "The Ascension of Moses," "The Apocalypse of Baruch," "The Gospel of Thomas." The subjects treated were of a religious nature and similar to those treated in the canonical books. The Apocrypha are divided into two classes on the basis of their subject matter, Apocrypha of the Old Testament and Apocrypha of the New Testament.

**A. Origin of the term.** Apocrypha is derived from the Greek *ἀπόκρυφος* which means hidden or secret. The ancient pagans had sacred books concerning the mysteries of their religions; these were called Apocrypha because they were kept hidden in the temples and were communicated only to the initiated. In the course of time the magicians and wonder-workers forged similar books from which they pretended to learn heavenly secrets. Among the Jews such pretenders often attributed their books to patriarchs or prophets. So the term "apocryphal" came to mean forged, false, heretical, and the early Fathers applied it to "writings of a religious character, but of uncertain or spurious origin, which contained a mixture of truth and fiction, but were rejected by the Church as uncanonical."

**B. Apocrypha of the Old Testament.** These were chiefly written by Jews, though many of them contain later interpolations by Christians. They add precepts to the Law, or propose fictitious narratives about Biblical persons, or pious exhortations, or in the style of the prophecies and under the name of a patriarch or prophet foretell the near approach of the Messianic liberation. Most of them were

written between 200 B.C. and A.D. 200. Three of them, 3 and 4 Esdras and the Prayer of Manasses, are printed in small type at the end of the Latin Vulgate, "lest they be lost entirely." Some of the others are: 3 and 4 Machabees, Life of Adam and Eve, Book of Henoch, Testimony of the Twelve Patriarchs, Odes of Solomon, Book of Jubilees, Sibylline Oracles (in imitation of the pagan oracles).

**C. Apocrypha of the New Testament.** These originated mostly in the second and third centuries and may be divided into two classes:

a) *Pious books with a worthy purpose*, such as the Epistle of Barnabas, the Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, the Pastor of Hermas, the Didache.

b) *Pious books intended merely to satisfy idle curiosity, and heretical books written to spread false doctrines.* They usually treat at length matters either briefly mentioned in the canonical books or omitted entirely; their favorite subjects are the infancy of our Lord or His life on earth after His Resurrection. They notably lack the simplicity and sublimity of the sacred books and contain many silly and absurd legends. Some fifty Gospels, twenty-two Acts, and many Epistles and Apocalypses are known to have existed, but most of them have perished. Some of them are: Gospels—according to the Hebrews, according to the Egyptians—of Peter, of Thomas, and the Proto-Evangelium of James; Acts—of Peter, of Paul; Epistles—of Abgar and of Jesus, of Paul to the Laodiceans, of Paul and of Seneca; Apocalypses—of Peter, of Paul, of Bartholomew.

**D. Value of the study of the Apocrypha.** They show some of the religious and moral ideas prevalent at the time of their composition; here and there they contain traces of true tradition not found elsewhere. Early Christian art and medieval poetry drew largely on them and consequently have much that would be unintelligible without a knowledge of the Apocrypha. When compared with the

canonical books they manifest the religious and literary superiority of the Bible.

20. **Lost books.** Both the Old and the New Testaments refer to books which have not come down to us. In the Old, some of these are: The Book of the Wars of the Lord, the Book of the Just, the Book of the Words of the Days of Solomon, the Book of the Words of the Days of the Kings of Juda, the Book of Samuel the Seer. In the New Testament, St. Paul speaks of two of his Epistles which are not extant, one to the Corinthians written before our First Corinthians (cf. 1 Cor. 5, 9) and the other to the Laodiceans (cf. Col. 4, 16). It is probable, though by no means certain, that some of these books may have been inspired.

21. **The Agrapha.** This term means "not written," and is applied to statements said to have been uttered by our Lord but not recorded in the canonical Gospels. They are found in the works of the Fathers, in Apocryphal books, and in the papyri; there is one in Acts 20, 35 ("it is more blessed to give than to receive") and another in the Codex Bezae after Luke 6, 4. Most of them seem to be fictitious.

## Chapter IV

### THE BIBLICAL TEXT

#### 22. *Text of the Old Testament.*

**A. Language of the Old Testament text.** All the books of the Old Testament were originally written in Hebrew except

a) *Wisdom and Second Machabees* which were written in Greek;

b) *Parts of Esdras and Daniel and one verse in Jeremias* (and perhaps *Tobias*) which were written in Aramaic (Esd. 4, 8-6, 18; 7, 12-26; Dan. 2, 4-7, 28; Jer. 10, 11).

Of the books written in Hebrew, the following are extant only in translations (the Greek translation being the most ancient): *Tobias*, *Judith*, *Baruch*, 1 *Machabees*, and the deuterocanonical parts of *Daniel* and *Esther* (*Esther* 10, 4-16, 24; Dan. 3, 24-90. 13. 14). *Tobias* is extant in Hebrew, but many think this a translation from Greek.

**B. Material and form of books.** The material used for books was either papyrus or parchment (vellum). In the early days, papyrus was more common since it was cheaper. It was made from the inner pith of the papyrus plant which grew in profusion along the banks of the river Nile. Strips of this fiber were laid close together and then a second layer was placed on top, but with the strips running at right angles to the other. After being moistened, the whole was subjected to pressure and the result was a fairly smooth writing surface. Papyrus was easily torn or worn away; hence it is not surprising that the original Biblical manuscripts and early copies lasted only a short time.

By the same process of moistening and pressing, sheets

of papyrus could be joined together indefinitely, but practical utility placed a limit on such joining and the longest known Greek manuscript measures thirty feet. Such lengthy strips were made manageable by being rolled around a cylinder; this produced the volume (Latin *volumen*, a roll). Each book of the Bible, then, would be in a separate volume, or, if it were long, in several volumes (hence the name Pentateuch, i.e., five volumes for the books of Moses, from the Greek *τεῦχος*, volume).

Parchment was made from the skin of animals; it was more durable than papyrus and gave a more solid surface for writing on both sides. It, too, could be rolled into volumes, but it could also be made into a codex, like our books, the single sheets being laid one above the other and the whole bound together at the back. Copies for the synagogue, however, continued to be made in rolls.

**C. Writing.** Though some have contended that the original writing in the Old Testament was cuneiform, i.e., like the Babylonian, there is no sufficient reason for surrendering the common and traditional opinion that it was the ancient Hebrew. These earlier Hebrew letters resembled the Phoenician and are preserved in some ancient inscriptions (e.g., those of Siloe and Gezer), on coins, and in the Samaritan text. Proofs that such letters were used at first are found in Jewish tradition and in the errors made by copyists who confused letters similar in the older alphabet but quite distinct in the later writing. The Arameans (Syrians) modified this earlier form of writing, and the Hebrews borrowed the new form from them. This modification resulted in the present "square writing." The transition started after the exile and under Esdras (i.e., about 450 B.C.) and was probably completed before the time of Christ, since the "jot" mentioned in Matt. 5, 18, refers to the Hebrew letter "yod" which was the smallest of all the letters in the new form, but not in the old.

In writing, the words were slightly separated but not suffi-

ciently to prevent occasional confusion. It is doubtful whether the sentences were separated by punctuation marks till after the time of Christ, when the scribes divided the books into verses with points to separate them. Numerals were indicated by letters; hence the numbers given in the various texts are often different.

23. ***History of the Hebrew text.*** Three periods can be distinguished in the history of the transmission of the Hebrew text.

A. **The first period** (from the beginning to about A.D. 100). This is marked by great variety in the readings of different manuscripts. These manuscripts no longer exist, but the presence of numerous variants is shown by comparing parallel passages in the extant Hebrew text (i.e., passages that came from the same original text) and by comparing the present text with the Greek Septuagint or with the Samaritan Pentateuch.

B. **The second period** (from A.D. 100 to 500). This is marked by uniformity in the text. This was secured through the labors of the scribes who strove to get a fixed and correct text. According to the Talmud there were three slightly different texts in the Temple and from these a new text was formed by selecting readings found in two against one. The authorities gradually withdrew from use all other texts, venerated with superstitious zeal even the letter of the Scriptures, and treasured up traditional lore regarding both text and interpretation.

C. **The third period** (from A.D. 500 to 900). This is marked by the final fixing of the text so that, as far as was humanly possible, it became unchangeable. This was the work of the Masoretes, so called from "masora," which means tradition. They introduced the vowel signs (the previous text having consisted entirely of consonants) and wrote down the traditions regarding the text. This tradition, besides giving notes on the text, set down the number of verses, words, and even letters in each book, and these

totals were carefully recorded together with many details such as the central verse, word, and letter in a book or the number of times certain letters occur.

24. ***Manuscripts of the Hebrew text.*** The earliest extant manuscript of certain date is the Codex Babylonicus Petropolitanus, containing the Prophets and bearing the date 916. An undated manuscript in the British Museum, Oriental 4445, is believed by many to have been written about A.D. 850. Hence, it is only by comparison and inference that knowledge can be gained of the condition of the text before the Masoretes rendered it immutable.

25. ***Authority of the Hebrew text.*** Though not absolutely, it is correct substantially, and for the most part even accidentally. Its inaccuracies can often be checked by reference to the Septuagint or other early translations. Its correctness is indirectly attested by the Church, since the Latin Vulgate has been declared authentic and the Vulgate is based on the Hebrew text.

## 26. ***Text of the New Testament.***

A. **The Greek text of the New Testament.** All the books of the New Testament were originally written in Greek except the Gospel according to St. Matthew. This Gospel was in Hebrew (Aramaic), but it was soon translated into Greek and the original was lost.

B. **Language.** The Greek used was not classical, but popular (*κοινή*, common), the dialect then in use throughout the Orient. Compared with the classical, this dialect was greatly simplified in grammar and contained many new forms and foreign words. As found in the New Testament, this language, besides showing a Semitic influence, has many new words, and old words with new meanings, due to the necessity of expressing the new ideas introduced by Christianity.

C. **External form of the New Testament manuscript.** Three periods may be distinguished:

a) *In the first period* (from the beginning to about A.D.

300). The material used was mostly papyrus. The writing was by columns, usually two or three inches in width, with a small space between. It has been estimated that the Gospel of St. Matthew would have required a strip of papyrus thirty feet long, while the whole of the New Testament would have filled no less than two hundred feet. As this is seven or eight times the length of the average Greek manuscripts, there could have been no complete copy of the New Testament in a single volume; hence, the different books must have been in separate volumes.

*b) In the second period* (from A.D. 300 to 800). Papyrus was replaced by parchment or vellum. As this could be bound like our books, the collection of all the parts of the New Testament in one volume became possible. This is the period of the Uncials or Majuscules, i.e., manuscripts written throughout with capital letters. There were from one to four columns on a page; the words were not separated, and there were many abbreviations, but no breathings nor accents. It will readily be seen how easily variant readings could arise from errors in copying such manuscripts. To remedy this, single phrases were often written on single lines (colometry).

*c) In the third period* (from A.D. 800 to 1400). The Minuscules, or manuscripts written in small letters, begin to appear. These small letters were readily joined together as in our ordinary handwriting and so these manuscripts are also called Cursives. Parchment continued to be the ordinary material. But toward the end of this period (about the thirteenth century) paper was used. In the thirteenth century the text was divided into chapters by Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury. These Minuscules became the prevalent form of manuscripts from the eleventh century. To this period belong also the Lectionaries, i.e., books containing selections from the Gospels and Epistles to be used in the liturgy of the Church.

## **27. Number of New Testament manuscripts**



*in Greek.* There are 32 papyri fragments, 170 Uncials, 2,326 Minuscules, and 1,565 Lectionaries, giving a total of 4,093 manuscripts of the Greek New Testament.

**A. Designation of the manuscripts.** For convenience of reference various systems of marking the manuscripts have been introduced. The accepted system at present is:

a) Uncials are marked with numerals preceded by  $\alpha$  ( $\alpha 1$ ,  $\alpha 2$ , etc.), but for the principal ones the older system of marking by capital letters is still used (Alexandrian, A; Vatican, B; *Ephraemi Rescriptus*, C; Bezae or Cambridge, D; Sinaitic, Aleph  $\aleph$ ; Sangallensis, Delta  $\Delta$ , etc.).

b) Minuscules are marked by Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.).

c) The Papyri are marked  $P^1$ ,  $P^2$ , etc.

d) The Lectionaries are marked  $\mathbf{1}^1$ ,  $\mathbf{1}^2$ , etc., if they contain only the Gospels, or  $\mathbf{1}$  plus with a small "a" as exponent ( $\mathbf{1}^{+a}$ ) if they have the Epistles also, or  $\mathbf{1}^a$  if they have only the Epistles.

### 28. *Some important Greek manuscripts.*

**Codex Sinaiticus** (Aleph  $\aleph$ , S,  $\alpha 1$ ,  $\delta 2$ ) from the close of the fourth century: pages 15 by  $13\frac{1}{2}$  inches; four columns to a page, each column about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide and containing 48 lines. Discovered by Tischendorf, in 1844, in the monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai. Contains all the New Testament, most of the Old, and the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas. Kept at Petrograd.

**Codex Alexandrinus** (A,  $\alpha 2$ ,  $\delta 4$ ) from the fifth century; pages  $12\frac{5}{8}$  by  $10\frac{3}{8}$  inches; two columns to a page. Contains all the Old Testament, the New with the exception of Matt. 1-25, 6; John 6, 50-8, 52; 2 Cor. 4, 13-12, 6, and had also the third and fourth books of the Machabees and the first Epistle of Clement of Rome. Kept in the British Museum.

**Codex Vaticanus** (B,  $\alpha 3$ ,  $\delta 1$ ) from the fourth century; pages  $10\frac{1}{2}$  by 10 inches; three columns to a page.

Contains the whole Bible, but long sections have been lost (Gen. 1, 1-46, 28; Pss. 105-127; 1, 2 Macc.; Hebr. 9, 14-13, 25; 1, 2 Tim.; Tit.; Philem.; Apoc.). Now in the Vatican Library.

**Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus** (C, 04,  $\delta$  3) from the fifth century; pages 12 $\frac{1}{4}$  by 9 inches; one column to a page. In its present mutilated form, 64 leaves contain Old Testament passages, and 145 New Testament, but originally it had the complete Bible. The original text had been removed to make way for a Greek translation of some of the writings of St. Ephrem of Syria, and hence it is a palimpsest. Now in the Bibliotheque National, Paris.

**Codex Bezae** (D, 05,  $\delta$  5) from the fifth or sixth century; pages 10 by 8 inches; one column to a page, but written according to colometry (i.e., each line containing a complete clause or phrase); the left page has the Greek text while the right page has the Latin. It contains the Gospels, the Acts, and 3 John 11-15 in Latin; hence, it probably had the Catholic Epistles; there are many mutilations, especially toward the end of the Acts, and its text is often peculiar. Presented in 1581 by Beza to the University of Cambridge where it is now.

29. **Variant readings.** In this large number of manuscripts it was inevitable that proportionately large numbers of different readings should be found. Some of these were mere mistakes of copyists, others were introduced deliberately in an attempt to improve the text by polishing the style or by bringing the readings of one Gospel into closer harmony with those of another.

**A. Reconstruction of the text from the variants.** The work of collecting these variants was begun in the sixteenth century. Over 200,000 have been noted, but most of them concern only such unimportant items as differences in spelling or word order, or are so evidently erroneous as to be excluded at once. The next step toward restoring the original text was to classify these variants. This led to the

classification of the manuscripts into "families," i.e., those which closely resembled one another and hence had descended from the same original manuscripts. Though critics are not in full agreement in their arrangement of the manuscripts in these families, they have distinguished in general various classes or forms of the text; e.g., Vaccari gives:

- a) *Alpha form*, found in A and most later manuscripts.
- b) *Beta form*, found in B, Aleph <sup>8</sup>.
- c) *Delta form*, found in D and a few others.

#### **B. Characteristics of these forms of the text.**

The alpha form has the most polished Greek, frequent paraphrasing for clearness, harmonizing tendency (i.e., making one reading agree with another in a different Gospel), and fuller readings formed by combining readings from the beta and delta forms (e.g., in Luke 24, 53, this alpha form has *praising* and *blessing* God where the beta form has *blessing* God and the delta form *praising* God).

The beta form is concise, free from the harmonizing tendency, and is now generally considered the best.

The delta form exhibits the harmonizing tendency, many omissions and additions, and frequent paraphrasing (e.g., in Matt. 27, 23, for *but he said* it has *the governor said to them*).

Result: The critical text arrived at is substantially certain and for the most part certain even in accidentals. Hardly a thousandth part of the text is still doubtful in sense, and only some fifteen texts of any importance are in this doubtful part; no dogmatic truth has perished nor has any been added by these variants.

The more important texts affected are: Mark 1, 1 (the Son of God); 16, 9-20 (the appearances of our Lord after His resurrection); Luke 22, 43-44 (the bloody sweat); John 5, 34 (the angel descending into the pond); 7, 53-8, 11 (the woman taken in adultery); 1 Cor. 15, 51 (the resurrection of the dead).

30. **The printed Greek text.** The first book printed after the invention of printing in 1452 was the Latin Vulgate. The notable Greek texts were printed as follows:

1514. Cardinal Ximenes printed the Greek text in his *Complutensian Polyglot*, but the work was not actually published till 1520. A polyglot is a volume with the text in two or more languages; this one receives its name from the place of publication, Complutum, now Alcala, in Spain.

1516. Erasmus of Rotterdam published the text at Basle; four other editions appeared up to 1535.

1546-51. Robert Stephanus (Etienne) of Paris published four editions of the text, the last edition being noteworthy especially because in it the verses were separated and numbered.

1633. The printer Elzevir of Leyden issued the text of Stephanus in handy form and in the preface he informed the reader: "You have therefore the text received by all." This claim of his gave rise to the title "Received Text," and, in fact, this text became the popular Bible.

All these printed editions have the alpha form of text and were based on only a small number of manuscripts of comparatively late date.

**A. Early critical editions.** These contented themselves with noting variant readings and arranging them in some sort of order. The more important of these early editions are: 1707, John Mill of Oxford; 1734, Bengel; 1742, Bentley; 1751, Wettstein (who invented the identifying ciphers for the manuscripts); 1774-85, Griesbach; 1820-45, Scholz (Catholic).

**B. Later critical editions.** Early in the nineteenth century critics began to depart from the Received Text and published in the text what they judged to be the best readings. Important editions are: 1831-50, Lachmann; 1857-69, Tragelless; 1869-94, Tischendorf (of his many editions the most famous is the eighth large critical edition with

Prolegomena by his disciple, Gregory); 1881, Westcott and Hort (with manuscripts divided into families); 1902, B. Weiss; 1913, von Soden. Handy editions have been issued by Brandschied, Hetzenhauer, Bodin, and Vogels (all Catholics) and by Nestle (non-Catholic).

**C. Summary of the printed Greek text.** The following forms of the Greek appeared:

In the sixteenth century the alpha form appeared in the first printed editions.

In the seventeenth century the alpha form became the Received Text.

In the eighteenth century the alpha form was attacked by collections of better readings printed in the notes (critical apparatus).

In the nineteenth century the beta form was printed as the text, while the alpha form was relegated to the notes.

In the twentieth century the beta form became the Received Text, while the alpha form was entirely discredited.

## Chapter V

### TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE

31. *Value of the translations.* The ancient translations are of great value for the light they throw on the text, for the help they often give in determining the meaning of the text, and for the proof they furnish of the high esteem in which the Scriptures were held.

32. *The Septuagint or Greek version of the Old Testament.* This is the oldest of the translations and from it most of the other ancient versions were made.

**A. Origin of the Septuagint.** The Pentateuch was translated into Greek at Alexandria under Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 B.C.). The other books were gradually translated by different writers. About 130 B.C. most of the books, if not all, had been translated, so that it seems safe to say that the whole was finished by 100 B.C.

The chief source of our information regarding the beginning of this translation is the "Letter of Aristeas" to his brother Philocrates in which it is said that, at the request of Ptolemy Philadelphus, seventy-two learned men were sent from Jerusalem to Alexandria, and that they translated the Pentateuch at the royal expense. Though not authentic, this letter is conceded to be reliable regarding the main fact, since it was written at least as early as 200 B.C. and was generally accepted by the Jews in the second century B.C. as a true account of the origin of the Greek translation of their sacred books. The number seventy-two is a fiction, but it gave rise to the ordinary title of the translation (Septuagint, meaning seventy).

That the translation of the other books was due to

different writers is clear from the marked differences between the various books.

The time limit fixed for the completion of the greater part of the work is drawn from the Prologue to the Greek translation of the book of Ecclesiasticus. The translator (a grandson of the original author, Jesus, son of Sirach) implies that at the time of his translation (about 130 B.C.) most of the sacred books ("the law, and the prophets, and the rest of the books") had already been translated.

**B. Quality of the translation.** In general the Septuagint ranks very high as a translation, but there are notable differences between the books. In some the translation is slavish, in others, literal, in others, free; some books show a very clear understanding of the text, while others are quite weak in this respect; again, the Greek used ranges from real excellence in some books to marked deficiency in others. These differences in method, in understanding, and in style can be explained only by supposing that the books were translated by different writers.

In the second century several new Greek translations were made by Jews to secure a text more in harmony with the Hebrew and to discredit the Septuagint which had been adopted by the Christians. Aquila (about A.D. 140) translated word for word; Symmachus (about A.D. 200) aimed rather at the literary charm of a freer version; Theodotion (about A.D. 180) kept to a middle course, avoiding both the literalness of Aquila and the freedom of Symmachus and producing not so much new translation as a revision of the Septuagint on the basis of the Hebrew text.

**C. History of the Septuagint.** Sharing the fate of all ancient books, the Septuagint in the course of time began to be corrupted. Even in the first century A.D. the number of variant readings was confusing. Its history is made up of the attempts to revise its text so as to get back to the work of the original translators or to bring the text into closer conformity with the accepted Hebrew text.

33. *The Hexapla of Origen* (A.D. 185–254). The great critical work of Origen was arranged in six parallel columns as follows:

- a) The Hebrew text;
- b) The Hebrew text written out in Greek characters;
- c) The translation of Aquila;
- d) The translation of Symmachus;
- e) The Septuagint;
- f) The translation of Theodotion.

The fifth column, then, contained Origen's revision of the Septuagint. It was prepared by a careful comparison of the manuscripts at his disposal. Where these manuscripts could not be reconciled, he selected the reading contained in the other Greek translations in columns three, four, and six. Where the Septuagint omitted a passage, he supplied it from these same translations, usually, however, from Theodotion.

But Origen's purpose went beyond the mere supplying of a corrected text in the Septuagint; he wished further to indicate to the Christians of his time where the Septuagint agreed with the Hebrew text and where it differed. This was especially important at that time because the Jews were the principal opponents of the Christian controversialists and they loudly proclaimed that the Septuagint, which was the text generally used by the Christians, did not give the true sense of the Scriptures. Besides, the Jews did not accept the deuterocanonical books and hence in disputing with them the Christians could not draw Scriptural arguments from these books. Origen used in his revision of the Septuagint a system of critical marks to show at a glance the additions or omissions of the Greek text as compared with the Hebrews.

**A. Value of Origen's Hexapla.** It contributed greatly to both textual criticism and correct exegesis. Later on, however, when his critical marks were either misunderstood or omitted, the way was opened to fresh corruption of



the Septuagint text. Some editors considered the marked passages as spurious, others imagined that the sections added from Theodotion formed part of the original Septuagint text.

**A. *Later revisions of the Septuagint.*** Hesychius (perhaps about A.D. 300, and Lucian A.D. 311) published revised editions of the Septuagint.

**A. *Subsequent condition of the text.*** Origen's revision was widely copied, but from the fifth century, families of texts mingling all three revisions (i.e., Origen, Hesychius, and Lucian) began to appear and these, together with the three revisions themselves, in various stages of accidental corruption, continued down to the period of printing.

Sometimes the Hexapla was copied with the omission of the columns containing the Hebrew text and its Greek transliteration, producing the Tetrapla; again a seventh column was added containing the Greek of a partial translation called the "fifth" version and with this extra column the Hexapla became the Heptapla; another partial translation called the "sixth" was sometimes inserted, giving the Octapla.

**B. *Printed editions of the Septuagint.*** There are four principal printed editions:

a) Complutensian, published in 1520, but printed some years earlier;

b) Aldine, 1518;

c) Sistine, 1586-87; this follows the Vatican Codex (B) chiefly;

d) Grabe, 1707-20 (based chiefly on A).

**C. *Modern works in criticism.*** Among important works in criticism the following may be mentioned:

Holmes-Parsons, 1798-1827, five volumes giving the Sistine text with variant readings collated;

Lagarde and his successors of the Gottingen board (1868, etc.) attempt to restore the original Septuagint;

Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 1909 (the best handy edition);

Brooke-McLean, *The Old Testament in Greek*, 1906.

### 35. *Latin translations.*

**A. Early Latin translations.** There is convincing proof that at least some of the divine books had been translated into Latin before the year A.D. 200.

In the Acts of the Martyrs of Scillium (a suffragan See of Carthage in proconsular Africa) it is narrated that when the judge questioned these martyrs about what they were carrying in their bags, they answered: "The books and Epistles of Paul (Kirch, *Enchirid.* 72). These martyrs suffered about A.D. 180; they were of the lower class and would hardly have been able to read anything but Latin; though they name only Paul, some of the other Scriptures had doubtless been also translated at this time.

The letter of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons, about 177 (Euseb. *H.E.* V 1, 22).

The Latin translator of the Epistle of Barnabas seems to have used a Latin Bible.

Tertullian speaks several times of a Latin version (*Adv. Marc.*, 2,9; 5,4). It seems probable that the books were translated at different times and by different translators.

*a) Place of translation.* It cannot be determined whether this translation was made in Africa or in Northern Italy. For at least some of the books, it seems that there was one translation in Africa and another, or perhaps several, in Europe. St. Augustine says the Latin translators were too numerous to count, but it is uncertain whether he means translators or mere revisers.

*b) Value of this translation.* It is difficult to get the original form of this translation since the existing manuscripts usually have mixed texts from various sources and show the influence of the Vulgate, but where it can be discovered, its antiquity gives it importance.

36. *The Latin Vulgate.* In the fourth century there

was such diversity in the current Latin texts that Pope St. Damasus (A.D. 360–384) commissioned St. Jerome to issue a corrected text. After revising the Latin text of the New Testament and part of the Old on the basis of the Greek, he undertook a new translation of the Old Testament from the original Hebrew. He was engaged on this work for about 15 years (A.D. 390–405).

**A. Contents of the Vulgate.** In the form in which it became the accepted text in the Church, the Vulgate contains:

*a)* The Psalter, revised by St. Jerome on the basis of the Septuagint through Origen's Hexapla (this is called the Gallican Psalter to distinguish it from an earlier revision by St. Jerome, called the Roman Psalter),

*b)* The Protocanonical books of the Old Testament (except the Psalter), translated by St. Jerome from the Hebrew (the deuterocanonical parts of the books of Esther and Daniel are St. Jerome's translation from the Greek),

*c)* Tobias and Judith, translated by St. Jerome from the Aramaic,

*d)* The other deuterocanonical books (Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, 1 and 2 Machabees) retained from the Old Latin Version (since St. Jerome omitted them),

*e)* The New Testament, revised by St. Jerome from the Greek.

**37. History of the Vulgate.** Despite opposition at the beginning, the new translation gradually won favor during the fifth and sixth centuries, and by the seventh century it had become the common text in the Western Church.

**A. Revisions of the Vulgate.** The text soon became corrupted owing chiefly to the continued use of the Old Latin translations along with the Vulgate. Revisions were attempted by:

Alcuin in A.D. 801, by order of the Emperor Charles the Great; Theodulphus, Bishop of Orleans, A.D. 821; Lanfranc,

A.D. 1082, and Stephen, Abbot of the Cistercians, in A.D. 1109.

While these revisions had their value, they added to the prevalent confusion. In the thirteenth century the University of Paris adopted Alcuin's revision, but in an early corrupted state; this became the model and was widely spread. To amend this text *correctoria* were published, i.e., collections of the variant readings with decisions on their relative value; these, too, produced confusion worse confounded.

**B. Printed editions.** The Vulgate was the first book issued after the invention of printing in 1452. Before the end of the fifteenth century nearly a hundred varying editions had been printed, but they were all based on late manuscripts and had little critical worth. The first really corrected text was that printed in the Complutensian Polyglot in 1517. The Council of Trent in 1546 ordered a corrected and official edition of the Vulgate to be published; the result was the Clementine Vulgate, published in 1592. Even the editors felt that it was not a perfect work, but it was the best possible under the circumstances. In 1907, Pope Pius X commissioned the Benedictine Fathers to restore the text of St. Jerome. Their first volume, the Book of Genesis, appeared in 1927.

**38. *The Vulgate declared authentic by the Church.*** At the time of the Council of Trent (1546) the Vulgate had lost its primitive purity and besides there were many other Latin translations, all claiming to give the correct text. The Protestant Reformers rejected the Vulgate, and even some Catholics neglected it or changed it at will. The Council aimed at having the Vulgate alone (of the Latin versions) considered authentic and at having it published in a corrected form (Denz. 785-786).

"Authentic" here means that this translation is trustworthy and that its testimony cannot be rejected in public lectures or disputations; this presupposes that the translation is in substantial conformity with the original, since, if it

were not, it could not be set up as a trustworthy witness to the original. As this decree of the Council has been often misunderstood, the following points should be noted:

a) The decree does not touch the original texts (Hebrew or Greek), nor the Septuagint. The decision is between the Vulgate and the other current Latin translations. The original texts, being the word of God, did not need a declaration of their authenticity, though there might be question of a particular codex or printed edition of them; and the Septuagint already had the sanction of the early Fathers and of long use in the Church.

b) The Vulgate is declared to be a true source of revelation so that no false doctrine or false rule of conduct can be legitimately deduced from it, and so that it faithfully expresses everything pertaining to the substance of the word of God.

c) The Vulgate is not declared free from errors in matters which do not pertain to faith or morals.

d) No added authority is given by this decree to dogmatic texts which had previously been doubtful, nor does the Council declare that all the dogmatic texts of the original are necessarily in the Vulgate.

### 39. *Other ancient translations.*

#### **Summary of other early translations of both Testaments:**

Second century — Syriac (but extant manuscripts are only of the fourth and fifth centuries);

Third century — Coptic (Sahidic or dialect of Upper Egypt);

Fourth century — Gothic; Coptic (of Middle Egypt);

Fifth to eighth centuries — Ethiopic; Armenian; Georgian; Arabic; Persian; Coptic (Bohairic or dialect of Lower Egypt).

## Chapter VI

### THE SENSES OF SCRIPTURE

40. *The literal and typical senses.* Since the Bible is the work both of God and of the human writers, it agrees in many ways with ordinary books and yet in other ways it differs from them. This difference has to be considered in speaking of the senses of Scripture. Every book is expected to have some definite meaning as a whole and in each of the sentences that go to make it up. The same holds true of the Bible, but the Bible is unique in this, that it may have another meaning added to the literal meaning. This further meaning is called the "typical sense." Hence, there are two senses in Scripture, the literal and the typical.

**A. Definitions.** Sense, as used in this discussion, is that which the Holy Ghost, the principal author of the Bible, intends to express either directly or indirectly. The literal sense is that which is directly expressed through the words used. The typical sense is that which is expressed through persons or things used by the Holy Ghost to signify other persons or things; hence, it is only indirectly expressed through the words.

The literal and typical senses are seen in such passages as the early chapters of Genesis, where much that is said about Adam has an added meaning referring to our Lord. The literal meaning in such passages concerns Adam and is known directly through the words; but Adam himself is intended by the Holy Ghost to foreshadow Christ, and this foreshadowing is the typical sense.

"Sense" is here used as distinguished from the general signification which a word may have in itself. As given in a dictionary, any word may have many significations, but

in a determined passage in a book it can have only one sense, unless the passage is to become ambiguous. Taken in its context a word expresses a determined thought, and this is its sense.

41. *The literal sense.* This is the meaning directly expressed by the words, as *God created heaven and earth*. It includes figurative expressions, such as metaphors, allegories (extended metaphors), parables, and symbols. When, for example, the Scripture speaks of the arm or the hands of God, these are metaphors for His power of operation, and this is the literal sense. Every passage in the Bible has a literal sense, and one literal sense only.

The literal sense includes one species of what is sometimes improperly called the "consequent sense"; this means a fuller and more perfect explanation of the meaning than can be secured by merely giving the expression an ordinary interpretation independent of the fullest understanding of the force it derives from its immediate context. The attributes of God, for example, are necessarily expressed in terms used, in their ordinary sense, of men and material things; their full extent can be approached only by analyzing these expressions and removing from them everything implying limitation or imperfection. As the terms used to describe these attributes yield this more ample meaning because of their being referred not to creatures but to God, some call this a consequent sense. It is certainly a sense, since the most perfect meaning must clearly have been intended by the Holy Ghost; but as the term "consequent" may readily lead to confusion, it seems better to consider this fuller meaning as the literal sense even though it requires analysis for its discovery.

Another species of what is called the consequent sense is arrived at by reasoning; a conclusion is reached through a syllogism, one premise of which is from Scripture, the other from reason. Granted that the premise from reason is true and that the syllogism is in form, the conclusion must

surely have been intended by the Holy Ghost, and in this way it could be called a sense; but since the human element enters both in deciding that the premise from reason is itself true and in drawing the conclusion, this conclusion cannot be said strictly to give the literal sense. The value, however, of such conclusions, as well as that of the fuller sense discussed in the foregoing, needs no demonstration.

42. *The typical sense.* This is the meaning expressed by persons or things so disposed by Providence that they represent other persons or things. Only the free disposition of God gives this power of representation, and consequently this typical sense is found only in Scripture, not in other literary works. The persons or things used in this way to signify something else are called "types" (cf. Rom. 4, 14; 1 Cor. 10, 6), while the persons or things signified by them are called "antitypes" (cf. 1 Pet. 3, 21). Since it all depends on God's will, revelation alone can assure us that a thing is a type. Though of ourselves we can often discover similarities between Old Testament persons or things and those of the New Testament, we cannot be sure that God intended one to stand as a type of the other. Often such allegories, giving spiritual meanings to sensible things, are mere human fictions.

The symbols frequently used by the prophets are not types. The distinction may be kept clear by noting that the symbol is used solely to represent something else and has no other reason for existing, while the type has in itself its own reason for existing and the power of representing something else is then superadded by God. A good example of the symbol is had in Ezek. 12, 2 ff.; there the prophet goes through a series of actions whose sole purpose is to foreshadow how the people are to be removed from their homes and carried into captivity. But, while Adam was a type of Christ, he was really leading his own life like other men, and his actions as recorded in Scripture have their ordinary place as part of that real life. Hence, symbols fall under the



heading of the literal sense just as other figurative expressions do.

Other Scriptural names for types are allegory (Gal. 4, 24); example and shadow (Heb. 8, 5); parable (Heb. 9, 9).

Some of the more prominent types in the Old Testament are: Adam, David, Solomon, the Brazen Serpent, the Ark of the Covenant, the Paschal Lamb.

43. **Accommodation.** The words of Scripture may be applied to a person or thing not intended by the writer; this is called "accommodation." The resultant meaning is at times spoken of as the "accommodated sense," but it seems better to avoid this term since sense should be restricted to what is intended by the author. Accommodation by extension is had when the words of Scripture are extended to a person or thing similar to the person or thing intended by the writer, as when the praise bestowed on a holy person in the Old Testament is referred to the saints. This method of accommodation has been widely used in the Church, and is of great value as long as it is used properly, but its place is in exhortations or illustrations, not in argumentation.

Accommodation by allusion is had when the words of Scripture are applied to something quite different from that intended by the sacred writer; e.g., the words "with the holy thou wilt be holy . . . and with the perverse thou wilt be perverse" (Ps. 17, 26.27) teach that God deals with men according to their deserts, but these words are sometimes used, in this form of accommodation, to enforce the lesson that evil companions lead a man to ruin. This use is evidently still farther removed from the sense than accommodation by extension and can be resorted to only with great caution.

When accommodation is used, it must not be presented as the real meaning of the Scriptures; it must be restricted to edifying topics; it must not be stretched to cover matters too far removed from the ideas of the sacred writer.

## Chapter VII

### RULES OF INTERPRETATION

44. ***Rules and aims of interpretation.*** Since the books of the Bible were written by men, their interpretation is governed by the ordinary rules of literary and historical criticism; but since they were written under inspiration and were destined for the Church, their interpretation is further subjected to special rules. The aim of all interpretation is the reproduction of the exact meaning of the author; this meaning is not always easy to grasp, especially when the book was written in a remote period and in an ancient language, and consequently the interpreter must proceed with great caution.

45. ***General requirements.*** These are (A) a comprehensive knowledge of the language in which the book was written, and (B) an appreciation of the force of the expressions in their definite context and their historical setting.

**A. Comprehensive knowledge.** However carefully a translation may have been made, it can rarely give the full meaning of the original; hence, recourse must be had constantly to the Hebrew and Greek texts, and this demands familiarity with these languages. In addition to the direct study of the languages, knowledge of the original texts will be secured by frequent reading of the sacred books, by consulting the ancient translations and the works of the Fathers and of such profane authors as Philo and Josephus, and by the use of concordances and dictionaries.

**B. The force of expressions.** The meaning of a word or phrase is often changed or colored by the context. The near context is made up of the sentences immediately

preceding or following the sentence under consideration; the remote context embraces the section or even the whole book in which the sentence occurs. The near context will serve to throw light on the progress of the writer's thought and will often exclude possible meanings which would be in conflict with the way he is developing his ideas. The remote context does the same on broader lines, since it reveals the general subject of the writer, his purpose, his style, and the logical dependence of the various parts of the book. History, poetry, and prophecy call for different methods of interpretation. The Biblical Commission has issued a warning against regarding as allegorical or fictitious those books which profess to be historical and have been accepted as such by tradition (June 23, 1905). Everywhere grammatical correctness and the ordinary (as opposed to the figurative) use of words must be taken for granted unless there is solid reason for judging otherwise. The sacred prose writers exhibit a fondness for sonorous rhythm often approaching the parallelism of Hebrew poetry; this produces a tendency to the repetition of words, phrases, or ideas in such a way as to give the impression that they were then taking up the subject for the first time. This had misled some modern critics into supposing that such repetitions invariably indicate the use of a new source which the writer then draws on without eliminating what he had already included in his book from another source. Obscure passages can often be cleared up by comparing them with parallel passages where the same words or topics are found; St. Paul often hints obscurely at subjects which he had handled more extensively in other places, and a comparison removes the obscurity. In comparing parallel passages it must be remembered that the same Holy Spirit is the primary author of all, and therefore no real discord can exist between such passages.

The historical setting is important since the writers addressed the men of their own times and used words and

ideas according to the custom of those days. It must be determined, as far as possible, who the writer was, when and why he wrote, what readers he addressed, and what were the political and religious circumstances of the period. Many turns of expression, figures of speech, and allusions become intelligible only in the light of the people's history, religion, culture, and customs. The help needed from history and archæology is to be sought in its broad outlines in the Special Introductions published for the individual books.

46. *Special rules.*

A. **The Scriptures are holy**, and so they must be dealt with in a holy manner. The interpreter should approach them with his soul prepared by prayer and a virtuous life to penetrate their meaning; humility is especially needed to guard against the rash injection of his own thoughts and feelings.

B. **The Scriptures are free from all error** because of their inspiration. No interpretation can be correct which supposes error on the part of the sacred writer; seeming mistakes may be due to the corrupt condition of the text, to our lack of knowledge of all the circumstances, or to our failure to understand correctly. This immunity from error extends only to the writer's own statements; if he cites the words of others, these words must be judged independently unless the writer stamps them with his approval or attributes them to God, to angels, or to men speaking in the name of God. Sometimes the writer may quote without saying expressly that he is giving the words of another, but such tacit quotations are not to be admitted unless they can be clearly proved (Biblical Commission, Feb. 13, 1905; Denz. 1919).

C. **There can be no contradiction** in Scripture, and so no interpretation can be accepted which makes the writer contradict himself or other sacred writers. Apparent contradictions are to be explained by a careful consideration of the special aspect under which the same topic is treated in

the different passages or by showing that the topic itself is different.

**D. Scripture cannot contradict science**, and so no interpretation can be correct which is against what science clearly and certainly demonstrates. But in history and natural science there is often a mingling of the true and the false, the certain and the doubtful; these elements must be carefully distinguished and it must be shown that what is really established as true and certain is not against Scripture. Blind faith cannot be placed in all profane historical documents; the ancient historians were often swayed by party spirit or the desire to please and they were often only imperfectly acquainted with the facts; besides, many of the ancient monuments are obscure and yield only doubtful results. On the other hand, Scripture does not professedly teach chronology, and so care must be exercised in drawing up chronological schemes on the data it supplies. The shifting theories of natural science cannot be taken as a basis for interpreting Scripture; but where science has really arrived at demonstrated conclusions, Scripture is to be explained in harmony with such conclusions. The sacred writers, even when not writing in a poetical manner, follow the usage of popular language in which natural phenomena are described according to the impression they make on the senses and not according to the strict demands of science.

**E. The Church is the official guardian and interpreter of the Scriptures**, and hence they must be explained according to her understanding of them. The mind of the Church is revealed in her official pronouncements where she defines the meaning of a text directly by telling how it must be understood or indirectly by condemning heretical interpretations or by defining doctrines on which the meaning of certain texts depends. Her mind is also revealed in the unanimous teaching of the Fathers when they hold an interpretation in matters of faith or morals. Finally, the Church reveals her mind in her ordinary doctri-

nal teaching, and these doctrines, held as true and certain, must serve as the guide of the interpreter; this is called the "analogy of faith."

**PART TWO**  
**SPECIAL INTRODUCTION TO THE**  
**GOSPELS**





## Chapter VIII

### THE GOSPELS IN GENERAL

47. *The name "Gospel."* The name "Gospel" is from the old English word "godspel," a shortened form of "good spell," which meant "a good (pleasing, joyful) story or tale." Hence "Gospel" is the equivalent of the Latin Evangelium and the Greek εὐαγγέλιον which means (1) a reward, sacrifice, or feast for good news, and (2) the good news.

In the New Testament the word is used (1) for the redemption of man through Jesus Christ; (2) for the promises brought by Christ; (3) for the entire doctrine of Christ. Later, the term was applied to all the books in which the Apostles and Evangelists handed down the doctrine of Christ, and finally, it was confined to the four books which narrate the life of Christ. This last is the meaning here.

48. *General character of the Gospels.* The Gospels are historical records setting forth some of the principal events in the life of our Lord, but, more than that, they are dogmatic in their purpose. The words and deeds of Christ are selected and arranged for the purpose of instructing the reader in the chief truths of the faith. Much, therefore, is omitted, and often the chronological order of the events is departed from in order to group events bearing on some special point. This dogmatic purpose is clearly indicated by St. Luke when he says that he has undertaken the composition of the Gospel "that thou mayest know the verity of those words in which thou hast been instructed" (Luke 1, 4). St. John takes the same position when he says, "Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of

God; and that believing, you may have life in His name" (John 20, 30.31).

49. *The number of the Gospels.* Strictly speaking, the term "Gospel" should be used only in the singular, there being only one Gospel, that of Jesus Christ. This was probably the reason why the Gospels were styled, not the Gospel of St. Matthew, etc., but the Gospel according to St. Matthew, etc. Custom soon transferred the term directly to the separate books containing this one Gospel, and so it was used in the plural. There are four Gospels and four only. Though many apocryphal gospels were published, the Church, following the tradition of the Apostles, rigorously excluded them from use. The teaching of the early Fathers is tersely summed up in the words of Origen: "The Church has four Gospels, heretics have many more."

50. *The order of the Gospels in the Bible.* The order in which the Gospels are now placed in the Bible (St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John) dates back to the early days of the Church and reflects the opinion that they were written in that order. Sometimes, out of reverence for the dignity of the Apostles, the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. John are placed before those of St. Mark and St. Luke.

51. *The titles.* The titles prefixed to our Gospels (The Gospel according to St. Matthew, according to St. Mark, etc.) were already well known in the second century, since they are used by Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, the writer of the Muratorian Fragment, and Tertullian. The inference is justified that they date back to apostolic times. These titles indicate the authors and not merely that the Gospels were written according to the preaching of St. Matthew, etc. This is proved because (1) the Second Gospel is really according to the preaching, not of St. Mark, but of St. Peter; and (2) the earliest writers always accepted the titles as indicating the authors; e.g., the Muratorian Fragment reads: "The Third Gospel is that according to Luke; Luke, the physician wrote it." The preposition "according to" was used instead

of the genitive case "of" because, as previously noted, there is strictly only one Gospel, that of Jesus Christ. It is not probable, however, that the titles were prefixed by the authors themselves, for this was opposed to the custom of ancient authors, especially in the East.

## 52. *The internal arrangement of the Gospels.*

When dealing with historical events a writer may narrate them one after another in the order in which they happened; he is then following the chronological order. He may, however, depart from this order and group the events under certain headings; this is the logical order. The methods of the Evangelists are as follows:

A. St. Matthew has the chronological order from 1, 1 to 4, 11; the logical order from 4, 12 to 14, 12; the chronological order from 14, 13 to the end.

The matter from 4, 12 to 14, 12 is arranged under three headings: (1) the doctrine preached by our Lord (Chaps. 5-7, the Sermon on the Mount); (2) examples of His miracles (Chaps. 8-9); (3) examples of His parables (Chap. 13). The other parts of this section are devoted to various events with little attention to the order of their occurrence.

B. St. Mark has the chronological order for the most part.

C. St. Luke also keeps to the chronological order generally, but he omits a great deal of the later ministry in Galilee (as recorded in Matt. 11, 26-16, 12 and Mark 6, 45-8, 26) and adds a long section on various journeys to Jerusalem toward the close of the public life (9, 51-18, 31). (Notice the references to these journeys in 9, 51; 13, 22; 17, 11.)

D. St. John follows the chronological order. From the first testimony of John the Baptist to the marriage feast at Cana he proceeds day by day (1, 29-2, 2). Then he tells of our Lord's going to Capernaum where they remained not many days (2, 12). After this everything is dated by the feasts of the Jews; there are three Paschs (2, 13-23; 5, 1; 6, 4); next the Feast of the Tabernacles in September (7, 2-14); then the Feast of the Dedication in December (10, 22); and finally the last Pasch (11, 55; 12, 1). The Pasch occurred

at the same time as our Easter, i.e., in the spring from about the middle of March to the middle of April. The public life then lasted a little over three years, since during it the Pasch was celebrated four times.

**53. *Places where the Gospels were written.*** St. Matthew wrote in Palestine, perhaps at Jerusalem; St. Mark and St. Luke, at Rome; St. John, at Ephesus in Asia Minor.

**54. *Dates when the Gospels were written.*** The approximate time of the Gospel writings has been established as follows:

St. Matthew, between A.D. 44 and 50. He could hardly have written before A.D. 44, since he supposes that many Gentiles had already been converted, and they were not numerous in the Church before A.D. 44.

St. Mark, between A.D. 52 and 62. *They preached everywhere* (16, 20); these words imply that the great missionary work of St. Paul was already under way; this could not have been much before A.D. 52. St. Mark wrote before St. Luke, and therefore not after A.D. 62.

St. Luke, about A.D. 63. The Gospel was written before the Acts of the Apostles; the Acts carry their narrative only up to the time of St. Paul's first imprisonment at Rome and this imprisonment ended about A.D. 63 or 64, and the ending of the narrative at that point indicates that the Acts were composed before St. Paul's release from prison.

St. John, toward the end of the first century.

**55. *The Synoptic problem.*** The first three Gospels are called the "Synoptics" because their narratives cover the same general field and consequently can be readily set forth in the form of a synopsis by arranging them in parallel columns. At a single glance, then, on such an arrangement we see their similarities, or get the life of our Lord presented from the same viewpoint. This synopsis amounts to a period of preparation including the testimony of John the Baptist and the temptations of our Lord; then, a long period embracing Christ's ministry in Galilee and

its neighborhood; next, the last days of His work in Jerusalem, and finally, His passion and resurrection. It is natural to group these three Gospels together, not only on account of their similarity, but also because of the striking contrast between them and St. John's Gospel, where most of the events take place in Judea and Jerusalem.

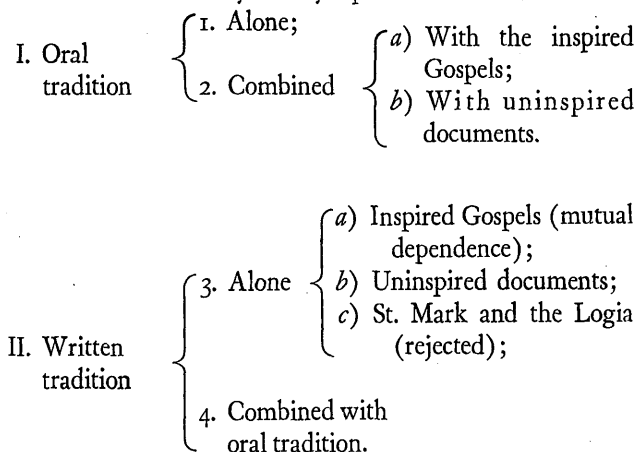
When compared with one another, the Synoptics exhibit a bewildering combination of likenesses and differences. The likeness at times amounts to identity; the difference, however, is equally obvious. The problem is to decide the sources from which each Evangelist drew his material. Did one make use of the others and, if so, what is the order of their dependence? Did they draw from other sources and, if so, were these sources the same or different?

**A. Solutions.** This problem still awaits a satisfactory solution. Owing to its complexity, only a summary of the proposed explanations is here given. These explanations may be grouped under two heads: (*a*) those giving oral tradition as the chief source used by the Evangelists; and (*b*) those giving written tradition as the chief source.

*a*) In their preaching the Apostles and their assistants undoubtedly soon adopted a fairly definite form for presenting the more important features in our Lord's life and teaching. When a Gospel was to be written, the author drew chiefly on this fixed form, adding to it, according to his purpose, other facts which he knew from personal experience, if he were an eyewitness of the events, or which had been handed down orally by the eyewitnesses. In this way the general similarity and variety in details is accounted for, but the minute similarity in word and phrase which recurs throughout the Synoptics is left unexplained, since it is hard to believe that oral tradition could have preserved such uniformity. For this reason many assert that, while oral tradition remained the chief source, the writers also drew upon written documents which were either the inspired Gospel (or Gospels) already published, or uninspired writings.

b) When this use of written documents by the Synoptics is considered to have been so extensive as to subordinate or exclude the use of oral tradition, the explanations vary according to the documents supposed to have been used. The "mutual dependence" theory makes the first Gospel published the source for the second and then these two the sources for the third; in determining the order of publication all the possibilities have been tried (Matt., Mark, Luke; Matt., Luke, Mark, etc.). Other theories suppose the use of uninspired accounts of our Lord as sources; each Evangelist used some of these used by the others but also had some which the others lacked. The "two document" theory, adopted by most non-Catholics, holds that St. Mark wrote first and that the other two used this Gospel along with an uninspired document called the "Logia" because made up of discourses delivered by our Lord; the narrative parts in St. Matthew and St. Luke not accounted for by their use of St. Mark and the Logia are ascribed to unknown sources oral or written. The following is a diagram of these theories:

The sources used by the Synoptics were:



**B. Authorization.** According to the decree of the

Biblical Commission of June 26, 1912 (Denz. 2164-65), the following points are to be held as certain:

*a)* The authenticity and integrity of all three Synoptic Gospels.

*b)* The Greek St. Matthew is substantially the same as its Aramaic original.

*c)* The order of composition is Aramaic St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke (no date is given for the translation of St. Matthew).

*d)* St. Mark wrote according to the preaching of St. Peter, St. Luke according to that of St. Paul.

*e)* St. Mark and St. Luke may have used other sources, either oral or written.

If these points are accepted, one is free to adopt any satisfying theory; but the "theory of the two documents" (St. Mark and the Logia, designated "3. c" in the preceding summary) does not meet these requirements and cannot be advocated, since it is opposed to the second and third points of the Commission.

## Chapter IX

### THE CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS

56. *What is meant by "credibility"?* Catholics accept the Gospels as the inspired word of God and, therefore, as infallibly true and trustworthy. Inspiration is the basis for the divine authority of the sacred books. But for the purposes of Apologetics it is necessary to inquire into the human authority of the Gospels, i.e., into the claims which they make to be accepted as true and reliable even by those who do not acknowledge their inspired character. These claims are briefly sketched here, and the students are referred for a fuller statement of them to the sections in the general and special introductions.

*Credibility*, when applied to a work of history, means that the document is reliable in regard to the events it treats. This involves three factors: genuinity, integrity, and historicity.

*Genuinity* means that the book was written by the author to whom it is ascribed, or at least that it was written about the time when it is supposed to have been written.

*Integrity* means that the book has come down to us unchanged. If the original manuscript has not been preserved, the extant copies or translations must be in conformity with that original.

*Historicity* means that: (1) The events narrated are presented as history and not as fiction. (2) The author was sincere and hence wished to write truthfully. (3) The author was not himself deceived, and hence was capable of writing the truth.

Both integrity and historicity admit of degrees which are usually classified as substantial and accidental. Substantial



integrity or historicity regards matters of importance closely connected with the aim of the writer, while accidental integrity or historicity regards matters of little or no importance with respect to his aim. In the Gospels whatever is necessary for a proper understanding of the character and doctrine of Jesus Christ is considered as substantial.

**57. *Genuinity of the Gospels.*** The Gospels were written by the authors to whom they are ascribed, i.e., by St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John.

**A. *Explicit external evidence.*** This is the testimony of other ancient writers who assert that these were the authors of the Gospels. This is the strongest of all arguments in a matter of this nature, for the authorship of a book is a historical fact and must be proved by historical evidence. For the Gospels this evidence is abundant; an unbroken line of witnesses, coming down from the second century, testify that the Gospels were written by these authors, and these witnesses declare that they are handing on the tradition received from their predecessors. Among these ancient witnesses the following deserve special mention:

Papias, Bishop of Hieropolis in Phrygia and a disciple of St. John the Apostle; he wrote about A.D. 120.

Justin the Martyr, A.D. 105-167.

Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons and a disciple of Polycarp who, in turn, was a disciple of St. John the Apostle: A.D. 140-202.

Theophilus of Antioch, Bishop of Antioch about A.D. 181.

Clement of Alexandria, A.D. 150-215.

The Muratorian Fragment, a manuscript discovered by Muratori and dating from about A.D. 170.

Tertullian, about A.D. 160-240.

Origen, about A.D. 185-254.

Eusebius, the Church historian, about A.D. 265-340.

**B. *Clearness of witnesses.*** The following excerpts will give an idea of the clearness with which these witnesses testify to the genuinity of the Gospels.

*Papias:* Mark having become the interpreter of Peter,

wrote down accurately whatever he remembered. It was not, however, in exact order that he related the sayings and deeds of Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor accompanied Him. But afterwards, as I said, he accompanied Peter, who accommodated his instructions to the necessities (of his hearers), but with no intention of giving a regular narrative of the Lord's sayings. Wherefore Mark made no mistake in thus writing some things as he remembered them. For of one thing he took especial care, not to omit anything he had heard, and not to put anything fictitious into the statements. Matthew put together the oracles (of the Lord) in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as best he could (Euseb. *H.E.*, III, 39).

*Justin the Martyr*: For the Apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them. . . . For in the memoirs which I say were drawn up by His Apostles and those who followed them (it is recorded) . . . (*Apol.* 12, 66; *Dial.* 106).

*Irenæus*: Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews, in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, also handed down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia (*Adv. Haer.* III, 1, 1; Euseb. *H.E.* V, 8).

So firm is the ground on which these Gospels rest that the very heretics bear witness to them, and, starting from these (documents), each one of them endeavors to establish his own peculiar doctrine. For the Ebionites, who use Matthew's Gospel only, are confuted out of this very same, making false suppositions with regard to the Lord. But

Marcion, mutilating that according to Luke, is proved to be a blasphemer of the only existing God, from those (passages) which he retains. Those again who separate Jesus from Christ, alleging that Christ remained impassible but that it was Jesus Who suffered, preferring the Gospel by Mark, if they read it with a love of truth, may have their errors rectified. Those, however, who follow Valentinus, making copious use of that according to John to illustrate their conjunctions, shall be proved to be totally in error by means of this very Gospel (*Adv. Haer.* III, 11, 7).

*Theophilus of Antioch:* These things the Holy Scriptures teach us, and all the inspired writers, among whom John says: *In the beginning was the Word, and Word was with God* (*Ad. Autol.* II, 22).

*Tertullian:* Of the Apostles, John and Matthew instill the faith into us, and of apostolic men Luke and Mark renew it (*Adv. Marc.* 4, 2).

*Clement of Alexandria:* When Peter had publicly preached the word of God in the city of Rome and, inspired by the Holy Spirit, had promulgated the Gospel, many who were present urged Mark to write down what Peter had preached, since Mark had already followed Peter for a long time and remembered his words. Mark, therefore, composed his Gospel and gave it to those who were asking him for it. . . . But last of all John, seeing that what pertained to the body of Christ had been handed down in the other Gospels, wrote a spiritual Gospel under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and at the request of his friends (*Euseb. H.E.* VI, 14).

*The Muratorian Fragment:* (The opening lines of this document have been lost; they undoubtedly referred to the first two Gospels.) The third book of the Gospel (is) according to Luke. Luke, the physician, wrote it under his own name in orderly fashion after the ascension of Christ when Paul had taken him with him since he was eager for the journey. Yet Luke himself had not seen the Lord in the

flesh; he commenced his account from the birth of John [the Baptist] according to the information he was able to gather. Of the Fourth Gospel John (one of the disciples), is the author.

*Origen:* The Church has four Gospels, heretics have many. . . . As I have received from tradition concerning the four Gospels which alone are admitted without controversy in the Universal Church of God which is under the heavens: first, namely, was written the Gospel according to Matthew, formerly a publican, then an Apostle of Jesus Christ, who issued it in Hebrew for the Jews converted to the faith; but the second is that according to Mark who composed it as Peter had explained it to him . . . ; and the third is that according to Luke, which is praised by Paul, and was written for the benefit of the Gentiles; and the last is that according to John (*In Mt.* Tom. I; Euseb. *H.E.* VI, 25).

*Eusebius:* Of all the disciples of the Lord, Matthew and John alone have left us narratives in writing. When Matthew had first preached the faith to the Hebrews and was about to set out from there for other nations, he wrote his Gospel in his native language and by his book compensated for his absence. . . . They say that Mark, having gone to Egypt, preached there the Gospel which he himself had written. . . . Luke, a resident of Antioch and a physician by profession, lived for a long time as the close companion of Paul and was the eager associate of the other Apostles. He left us two divinely inspired books. The first of these is the Gospel which he tells us he composed according to the information he had received from the very preachers of the divine word who had seen Christ from the beginning and whom he says he had followed for a long time. The other book is called the Acts of the Apostles. . . . We shall mention the undisputed writings of the Apostle John. First of all, his Gospel must be received as authentic, since it is recognized as such in all the churches which are under

heaven. The ancients rightly put it in the fourth place after the three others (*H.E.* II, 16; III, 4; III, 24).

**C. The implicit external evidence.** In addition to explicit statements concerning the authorship of the Gospels, early Christian literature abounds in allusions to them and testifies clearly that from the earliest times the Gospels were not only known but were also extensively used and highly honored. Even in the first century such allusions are to be found; the *Didache* or the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* has some thirty references to the Synoptics, the *Epistle of Barnabas* (perhaps of the second century) has two literal quotations from St. Matthew and allusions to several other passages, and *Clement of Rome* makes use of about ten passages from the Synoptics. Since the Fourth Gospel was written only toward the end of this century, it is not surprising that references to it are lacking.

A little later comes the testimony of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch. Born between A.D. 50 and 60, he suffered martyrdom under Trajan (A.D. 98-117). Just before his death he wrote seven letters to various churches and in them he refers repeatedly to the words of the Gospels, especially to St. John. This supposes familiar acquaintance with the Gospels, not only in Ignatius himself, but also in his readers; in fact, the Christians of his day were so accustomed to using the Gospels that he tells us his hearers sometimes demanded that he should support the details of his admonitions to them by proofs from the written word, for he says his teaching was at times met with the objection, "If I do not find that written in the archives" — that is, in the Gospel — "I will not believe it."

Polycarp was a disciple of the Apostle St. John and Bishop of Smyrna; his letter to the Philippians, the only work of his that has been preserved, is full of citations and allusions to the Synoptics and makes use also of the First Epistle of St. John, which is sufficient proof that he knew the Fourth Gospel, since this Epistle is a sort of preface to the Gospel

itself. Aristides, a philosopher of Athens, in his defense of Christianity addressed to the Emperor Antonius Pius about A.D. 140, sketches the life of Christ and says all this can be read in the Gospels or in the "book of the Christians." Justin, the Roman philosopher, mentions the "memoirs of the Apostles which are called Gospels" and says they were written by "the Apostles and disciples of Christ"; he quotes frequently from the Synoptics and has several undoubted allusions to St. John.

The early heretics testify to the genuinity of the Gospels by the use they made of them. The Ebionites used St. Matthew; the Marcionites, St. Luke; the Cerinthians, St. Mark; and the Valentinians, St. John. Each of these sects selected the Gospel which they thought could be most easily twisted to the support of their own peculiar tenets, but in ignoring or rejecting the others they did not dare to doubt their genuinity, but claimed only that these Evangelists had misunderstood the true Gospel. Basilides, about 130, prefaces his quotations from the Gospels with the customary Scriptural formula "Thus saith the Scripture" or "Thus it is written"; his citations are chiefly from St. Matthew, St. Luke, and St. John. About A.D. 175, Tatian, after having been converted by Justin the Martyr and then having adopted heretical views, published his *Diatesseron* or *Harmony of the Four Gospels*; this work proves that he had the four Gospels in the same form as we have them today and that he regarded them as being genuine.

The early Latin and Syriac translations of the Gospels date back to the second century, though the earliest extant manuscripts came from the fourth century. They prove beyond all doubt the existence of the Gospels in those early days in the same essential form as we have them today.

**D. Internal evidence.** A study of the Gospels themselves reveals that they must have been written by persons closely connected with the events they contain or at least closely associated with the original eyewitnesses.

The language used is the Koine, the Greek dialect current throughout the Roman Empire about the beginning of the Christian era and embodied in Jewish literature through the writings of Philo (20 B.C.—A.D. 54) and Josephus (A.D. 37–95). But this Koine is colored by the Aramaic dialect which was the native tongue of the Jews in Palestine at the time of Christ; not only separate words such as *Corban*, *Ephpheta*, *Talitha cumi*, but Aramaic turns of thought occur with frequency throughout the Gospels.

The authors of the Gospels were familiar with all that concerned Palestine at the beginning of our era. Cities, towns, mountains, rivers, valleys, deserts, and the lakes, together with the varied life of the people in these different localities, stand out clearly in their writings as the setting for the work of Christ. They speak with easy familiarity of the history, politics, and religious conditions of the times; this is all the more remarkable because shortly afterwards, with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the whole scene was completely changed and many of the characteristic features of the complicated social, political, and religious life of the Jews were swept away.

The words and deeds of Jesus are presented with a vividness and a wealth of detail that reveals the testimony of those who had themselves accompanied Him in His public teaching.

Finally the special features of each Gospel fit in with what we know from other sources of the different Evangelists and confirm in a remarkable way the proofs of genuinity drawn from later testimony. St. Matthew is revealed as the Jewish publican, St. Mark as the companion of St. Peter, St. Luke as the companion of St. Paul, and St. John as the beloved disciple.

**58. Integrity of the Gospels.** Integrity here means that the Gospels have come down to us substantially unchanged so that our present texts are faithful reproductions of the originals. Manuscripts, translations, and editions differ

from one another in many minor ways, giving rise to what are called variant readings, but the text has been preserved without any changes, omissions, or interpolations of such a kind as to give a meaning different from that intended by the Evangelists in matters necessary for determining the character and doctrine of Christ. The Evangelists undertook to instruct their readers about the life and works of Christ; they gave a definite account of His words and deeds, and this account, despite variations in unimportant points, has come down to us in our present texts. This constitutes substantial integrity as distinguished from accidental integrity. A person reading an approved edition of the Gospels today can be sure that he is reading substantially the same account as was written by the original authors.

The testimony given by the early Christian teachers for the genuinity of the Gospels includes also their substantial integrity. These teachers, speaking, for example, of the Gospel of St. Mark then used in the Church, testify that it was written by St. Mark and thereby affirm that the extant Gospel of St. Mark was the same as the original, for their testimony would be meaningless if it said that the extant Gospel of St. Mark was written by St. Mark and yet was substantially different from the original.

Besides, there are countless citations of the Gospels in various languages among the Christian writers of the first three centuries; from them it would be possible to build up almost the entire text of the Gospels both in Latin and Greek, and this reconstructed text would be substantially the same as the one we now possess.

The Church always watched with jealous care over the purity of the text, guarding it from all corruption and energetically rejecting the Apocryphal Gospels.

The texts recognized today as authoritative, such as the Latin Vulgate and the Critical Greek Editions published by various scholars, are in substantial agreement not only with each other but with the early manuscripts. Two of



these manuscripts (the Vatican and the Sinaitic) date from the fourth century, and their testimony is confirmed by the Latin and Syriac translations of the Gospels which originated as early as the second century, though the existing manuscripts are from the fourth century. From the succeeding centuries there have come down to us thousands of manuscripts in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopic, and Gothic. Of necessity the variant readings are numerous, but none of them is of dogmatic importance and consequently the text as we have it today is not only substantially, but also for the most part even accidentally certain.

**59. *Historicity of the Gospels.*** Historicity demands that the Gospels present events narrated as historical (not as fictitious), that the Evangelists were sincere (i.e., that they did not intend to deceive their readers), and that they were able to tell the truth (i.e., that they were not themselves deceived).

The whole tenor of the Gospels shows that the events are presented as historical happenings. There is not the slightest indication of fiction, while on the contrary the writers profess to be narrating what actually took place (cf. Luke 1, 1-4; John 19, 35; 20, 30, 31; 21, 24).

The sincerity of the Evangelists is above suspicion. No reason can be assigned why they should try to deceive, since such attempted deception would have brought them no advantage; their work exposed them to persecution and death in this life, while faith told them that fraud could merit only punishment in the next world. In a simple and faithful manner they record the ignominious as well as the glorious about both Christ and His disciples and are evidently free from all anxiety to make their Gospels harmonize with each other. Simple and unlearned as they were, they could not have invented such a character as Christ nor such a sublime doctrine without open contradictions and obvious exaggerations; the Apocryphal Gospels

show how easily the sublime runs into the ridiculous when recourse is had to fiction.

The ability of the Evangelists to furnish a reliable narrative is equally clear. They were eyewitnesses of the events they recorded or received their information from eyewitnesses. However strange the events might be, they took place in public before many witnesses, learned and unlearned, and were within the scope of the senses. The Evangelists were not credulous, since by nature and religious education they were disposed rather to doubt a spiritual Messiah and whatever He might say or do to establish His claims. Besides, if they were deceived, the deception must be blamed upon Christ Himself Whom even hostile critics declared to have been at least a most holy person.

Finally, while the Gospels are our chief source of information regarding the events they contain, many of these events are recorded in other ways and this enables us to check up on the Gospel accounts. The rest of the New Testament supports the Gospels partly by referring to some of the same events and partly by presupposing much that is detailed in the Gospels. The public teaching of the Church from the earliest times is in perfect agreement with what we learn from the Gospels. The martyrs, men of all classes and often contemporaries of the Evangelists, gave their lives in testimony to their belief in the truth of the words and deeds of Christ. Even profane historians, such as Josephus, confirm the Gospel narratives whenever they treat of the same events.

60. **Conclusion.** The credibility of the Gospels is firmly established. They were written by Apostles or the disciples of Apostles; they have been preserved for us without serious change in their picture of Christ and His teachings; they claim to be history and the strongest proofs are at hand to assure us that the Evangelists knew the facts and recorded them honestly.

To reject such documents is to abandon all the principles

of scientific historical study and to adopt in their place merely subjective prejudices. This becomes apparent from an investigation of the attempts made by the so-called "higher critics" to discredit the Gospels.

61. *Hostile criticism of the Gospels.* For nearly a century the Gospels have been subjected to the most violent attacks. The fundamental prejudice underlying these attacks is the rejection of everything supernatural. Misled by false philosophical principles, the rationalists refuse to give serious consideration to anything that transcends the purely natural; their sole guide is reason working on the materials supplied by the senses. Since the supernatural plays the chief part in the Gospels, the rationalists were compelled either to dismiss them entirely or to modify them in such a way as to exclude the supernatural.

G. Paulus (1761-1851) offered the "natural" explanation. He declared that the miracles were purely natural occurrences rendered marvelous by oriental exaggeration. His attempts to explain the miracles in this fashion were so puerile that his theory was soon abandoned.

D. F. Strauss (1808-1874) fathered the "mythical" explanation. According to him the supernatural element in the Gospels is the outcome of myths which in the lapse of time clothed in flesh and blood the vague ideas that previously existed about the Messiah. He acknowledged that his theory demanded a considerable interval between the time of Christ and the writing of the Gospels; consequently to secure this proper interval the Gospels must be dated from the close of the second century. The theory collapsed when even rationalistic critics surrendered this late date and approached nearer and nearer to the dates assigned by tradition for the writing of the Gospels.

Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792-1860) advocated the tendency theory. In the early Church, he claimed, there were two opposite tendencies, one to St. Peter and the other to St. Paul; the Gospel according to St. Matthew favored

St. Peter while that according to St. Luke favored St. Paul, and later the other two Gospels tried to effect a reconciliation of these two opposing tendencies. Like the mythical explanation, this theory required a late date for the composition of the Gospels, and collapsed with the return of opinion to the traditional dates; besides, the Gospels show no essential differences to support the fancied tendencies.

The "evolutionary" theory was built up on the assumption that Christ, as exhibited in the Gospels, is not the real Christ as He was during His earthly career, but the ideal Christ produced by the enthusiasm of His disciples long after His death. As the actual events of His life slipped back farther and farther into the past, His disciples subjected Him to a process of idealization which ended in their acknowledging Him as the Son of God. The Gospels picture this ideal Christ or the "Christ of faith," as distinguished from the "Christ of history," and consequently they can be accepted only as testifying to the current belief of Christians toward the end of the first century.

This theory ignores the obvious fact that the dogmas of the divinity of Christ and of His redeeming death were clearly and explicitly held long before the end of the first century; yet the Synoptics, who are supposed to be picturing the Christ of faith at the end of that century, bring out these dogmas only obscurely and, as it were, in an offhand manner or, according to many rationalistic critics, not at all. Such a process of idealization, moreover, by which a mere man, however wise and holy, was transformed into the Son of God, would have required far more time for its development than elapsed from the death of Christ to the writing of the Gospels. Besides, the Jews' habitual abhorrence of pagan polytheism would have made such idealization impossible. The Evangelists evidently aimed at presenting Christ as He was in His actual life and not as He might have been in the enthusiastic estimate of His followers some seventy years after His death (cf. Luke I, 1-4), and at the

time they were writing, many of the hearers of Christ were still living, so that it would have been impossible to foist upon the people an idealized Christ in place of the historical Christ. In the Gospels we have a faithful picture of the physical, political, and religious life of the Jewish people at the beginning of the first century, as well as an unvarnished narrative of the false ideas and imperfections of the Apostles. Since in these matters there is fidelity to the facts without any attempt at idealization, the same fidelity should be accorded the narrative in all that concerns the character and deeds of Christ. Once more we can refer to the Apocrypha to see what the attempts at idealization really accomplished; their childish and ridiculous stories emphasize the simple honesty and divine sublimity of the Gospel narratives.

The hostile critics have exhausted every effort to throw discredit on the Gospels. When forced to abandon one theory, they soon invent another and by the familiar device of ceaseless repetition they propagate their fundamental dogma that the Gospels are unhistorical. Their own utter lack of agreement among themselves and the extremes to which they have gone rather than abandon the attack are perhaps the most obvious refutations of their arguments. Though they have succeeded in blinding many by their display of erudition, the position of the Gospels as truly reliable historical documents remains unshaken even when they are studied merely as human compositions. Once their true character as inspired books is acknowledged, their historical truth and trustworthiness is, of course, beyond question.

## Chapter X

### THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW

62. *Sources of the life of St. Matthew.* And when Jesus passed on from thence, He saw a man sitting in the customhouse, named Matthew; and He saith to him: "Follow Me." And he rose and followed Him (Matt. 9, 9).

And when He was passing by, He saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus, sitting at the receipt of custom; and He saith to him: "Follow Me." And rising up, he followed Him (Mark 2, 14).

And after these things, He went forth, and He saw a publican named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom; and He saith to him: "Follow Me." And leaving all things, he rose up and followed Him (Luke 5, 27.28).

In the lists of Apostles St. Matthew is named seventh (Mark 3, 18; Luke 6, 15) or eighth (Matt. 10, 3; Acts 1, 13).

From these texts it is clear that one of the Apostles was Matthew, and that before receiving the divine call he had been a publican, i.e., a collector of taxes. Though St. Mark and St. Luke here use the name Levi, they do not mention Levi in their lists of Apostles, but there, like the First Gospel, they call him Matthew. So there can be no doubt that these accounts concern the same person. This is confirmed by a study of the various contexts; in each the circumstances of the calling are the same; the calling is preceded by the cure of a man sick of the palsy and is followed by the supper with publicans and sinners during which our Lord rebuked the Pharisees for being scandalized at His conduct. No difficulty arises from the two names, since it is well known that among the Jews men frequently had two names (e.g., Joseph or Barsabas, Saul or Paul).

Since the healing of the man sick of the palsy took place at Capharnaum on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, St. Matthew was probably living there at this time. Of the rest of his life the Scriptures tell us nothing beyond the experiences common to all the Apostles. Traditions, handed down by such writers as Clement of Alexandria and Irænaeus, say that he was noted for the austerity of his life and that, after preaching in Palestine for some fifteen years, he carried the Gospel to the Gentiles, different countries being assigned as the scene of his labors such as Arabia, Parthia, Persia, Syria, Macedonia, and Ethiopia.

*The Name.* "Matthew" according to some is from the Hebrew meaning "the gift of God"; others derive it from the Aramaic meaning "faithful." It has been suggested, but without probability, that our Lord Himself gave this name to the new Apostle who before had been called Levi; perhaps Matthew changed his name at the time of his vocation to mark the complete break with his past life.

The attempt has been made to contest the identification of Matthew and Levi by appealing to Clement of Alexandria and to Origen. Clement, it is true, quotes from Heraclion a list of the Apostles in which the two names Matthew and Levi appear, but it is a mere quotation without a word of approval and it is drawn from a writer whose authority cannot stand against the rest; probably Heracleon refers to Lebbeus, a name found in some manuscripts for the Apostle Thaddeus, also called Jude. Origen, too, mentions among the Apostles, besides Matthew, a publican named Levis, but he adds that only a few manuscripts have this name Levis in the list of Apostles; in reality, these manuscripts refer to Lebbeus, i.e., Thaddeus. Besides, Origen expressly mentions Matthew as an example of those who bore two names.

**63. *St. Matthew the Apostle is the author of our First Gospel.***

**A. Explicit external evidence.** By this we under-

stand the direct statements in early writers that St. Matthew wrote this Gospel.

a) *Papias*: "Matthew wrote in Hebrew the discourses (of the Lord) and each one interpreted them as he could" (Euseb. *H.E.*, III, 39).

b) *Pantaenus*, according to Eusebius, is said to have traveled to the Indies (i.e., probably southern Arabia) and there to have found among some Christians the Gospel of St. Matthew which had been there before his arrival (Euseb. *H.E.*, V, 10).

c) *Irenæus*: "Matthew published a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their language" (*Adv. Haer.* III, 1).

d) *Tertullian*: "Of the Apostles, John and Matthew instill the faith into us, and of apostolic men Luke and Mark renew it" (*Adv. Marc.* IV, 2).

e) *Clement of Alexandria*: "In the Gospel according to Matthew the genealogy begins with Abraham and ends with Mary, the mother of the Lord" (*Strom.* I, 21).

f) *Origen*: "As I have received from tradition concerning the four Gospels which alone are admitted without controversy in the universal Church of God which is under the heavens: first, namely, was written the Gospel according to Matthew, formerly a publican, then an Apostle of Jesus Christ, who issued it in Hebrew for the Jews converted to the faith" (Euseb. *H.E.*, VI, 25).

g) *Eusebius*: When Matthew had preached the faith to the Hebrews and was about to set out from there for other nations, he wrote his Gospel in his native language and by his book compensated for his absence (*H.E.*, III, 24).

h) *Evaluation of this testimony*. The authorship of a book is a historical question and must be settled primarily by an appeal to historical documents. The testimonies given above are drawn from such documents and are of the highest value, for they come from men of authority since Papias and Irenæus were Bishops, Pantaenus, Clement, and Origen were at the head of the famous School of Alexandria,



and Tertullian was a recognized leader first of the faithful and later of heretics. These testimonies are also universal since these men were well acquainted with the doctrine taught in the universal Church. They go back, too, to the time of the Apostles, for Papias was taught by St. John the Apostle, Irenæus was a disciple of St. Polycarp, who himself had heard St. John, and Pantænus, Clement, and Origen carried on in unbroken succession the teaching of the School of Alexandria. Finally, these men were guided by apostolic tradition, rejecting at once all books unsupported by that tradition and constantly appealing to it for ultimate decisions.

**B. Implicit external evidence** (i.e., the use of the book by writers who do not directly mention the name of the author, but show that they accept the book as part of the Scriptures). This Gospel was used:

a) By the apostolic Fathers: the Epistle of Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Ignatius Martyr, Polycarp, the Didache.

b) By the early Apologists: Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch, Justin Martyr.

c) By the early heretics: Cerinthus, the Ebionites, Valentinus, the followers of Basilides, Tatian in his *Diatesseron* or *Harmony of the Four Gospels*.

d) By the editors of the Apocryphal books: the Gospel according to the Hebrews, the Proto-Gospel of James.

e) It is found in the ancient Latin and Syriac translations which were made in the second century.

**C. Internal evidence** (i.e., evidence supplied by the book itself):

a) The author shows that he is a Jewish Christian, for:

He manifests the greatest reverence for the Old Testament and either directly or through others he refers to it more than 70 times; cf. 1, 23; 2, 6.18; 3, 3, etc.

Still he condemns the man-made traditions of the Pharisees and asserts that the Messiah has already come; cf. 5, 20; 6, 2.5.16; 12, 2.32; 15, 2; 16, 16; 23, 1.

b) The author wrote for the Jews, for:

He shows the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies in Jesus; cf. 2, 6; 4, 15; 11, 10; 12, 18; 13, 35; 27, 9-35.

He refers to the geography and customs of Palestine frequently but without offering such explanations of them as are given by St. Mark and St. Luke; compare Matt. 15, 1, and Mark 7, 1; Matt. 27, 6, and Mark 7, 11; Matt. 27, 62, and Mark 15, 42; Matt. 27, 57, and Luke 23, 51.

c) He speaks of St. Matthew in such a way as to suggest that he himself is St. Matthew; cf. Matt. 9, 9-13, and Mark 2, 13-17; Luke 5, 27-32; and Matt. 10, 1-4, and Mark 3, 13-19; Luke 6, 12-16. In Matthew the publican receives his well-known name Matthew; in the other two he is called Levi. In Matthew the place of the feast is simply "the house"; in the others it is "his house" and "Levi made a great feast in his house," emphasis being placed upon the fact that it was Matthew himself who gave this great feast in his own house.

Additional arguments are furnished by the title of the Gospel (§ 51) and by the decision of the Biblical Commission, 1911 (Denz. 2148).

64. *Objections against the genuinity of St. Matthew's Gospel.* Modern non-Catholic critics are almost unanimous in denying that St. Matthew wrote the Gospel ascribed to him. They hold that, while he may have written the parts where the words of our Lord are quoted, someone else put in the narrative sections and produced the Gospel as we have it today.

Their principal external argument is their interpretation of the testimony given from Papias, where it is stated that St. Matthew wrote "the discourses of the Lord"; according to these critics the words of Papias must be accepted in the narrowest sense as referring only to spoken words and excluding all narrative. But this position is untenable for the following reasons:

In the first place, the meaning attached to the term "discourses" (τὰ λόγια) by Papias himself is clear from the

context. For in speaking of the Gospel according to St. Mark and explaining why St. Mark departs at times from the chronological order of events, he says the reason is because St. Mark wrote his Gospel according to the preaching of St. Peter, who presented the Gospel in the way best suited to his hearers and did not give the "discourses" of the Lord in chronological order. So according to Papias, St. Mark, too, wrote out the "discourses"; and yet in the same passage Papias says that St. Mark wrote out "the words and deeds" of the Lord. It would be difficult to find a clearer statement of the sense in which Papias used the term "discourses"; for him it evidently means "deeds" as well as "words." Moreover the term "discourses" has a peculiar fitness when applied to the First Gospel, since it contains more of our Lord's words than the other Synoptics.

Nor is this use of the term "discourses" confined to Papias; it is found in St. Paul, Clement of Rome, and Irenæus.

a) Rom. 3, 2: "the words (*logia*) of God were committed to them" (i.e., to the Jews); the reference here is to the whole Old Testament.

b) Clement of Rome (1 Cor. 53), reminds the Corinthians of the "word (*logia*) of God" and then cites the narratives and discourses in Exod. 32, 7-11 and Deut. 9, 11-14.

c) Irenæus, *Adv. Haer.* 1, 8, accuses the Gnostics of corrupting the "sayings (*logia*) of the Lord," and as an example he takes Mark 5, 22, where there is a narrative (the miracle of the raising of the daughter of Jäirus).

A favorite method of non-Catholic critics is, while subordinating or ignoring external testimony, to put all possible emphasis on internal evidence, i.e., such as is found in the book itself. Here they claim that a critical examination of the First Gospel reveals, first that its style shows it to have been written originally in Greek, not in Hebrew (Aramaic), and therefore the testimony of our early witnesses is invalid;

and second, that it is so vague in details that it could not have been written by an eyewitness, and therefore it was not written by St. Matthew who certainly was present at most of the events narrated.

But mere style is a very uncertain source of argument, especially where there is question of a translation, for the translator may very well feel at liberty to transfer the substance of the book in the best language at his command; surely no one will deny the possibility, for example, of securing a translation of the ancient classics in excellent English. In particular, as a proof that this cannot be a translation, the critics stress the presence of an occasional play upon words; but an examination of their most striking example refutes their argument, for in that example the play upon words is carried over from the Greek into the Latin Vulgate and from the Vulgate into our Douay Version, the reading being Matt. 21, 41:

Greek, *κακούς κακῶς ἀπολέσει;*

Vulgate, "*malos male perdet*";

Douay, "he will bring those evil men to an evil end."

In regard to the second argument, the absence of vivid narrative is exaggerated, for there are examples of it in St. Matthew (cf. 12, 10-14); besides, all writers are not endowed with the same narrative or descriptive powers, and St. Matthew was primarily concerned not with giving a detailed biography of our Lord but with proving His Messianic mission.

**65. *Date of the composition of the First Gospel.***  
Tradition puts this as the first of the four Gospels. It is more difficult to assign the exact date. Catholic critics usually hold that it was written between A.D. 40 and 50, and of late years not a few non-Catholics have approached nearer and nearer to this traditional date.

Since St. Luke wrote his Gospel before A.D. 63, the First Gospel must be placed before that date. Those who favor

a date some twenty years earlier (i.e., about A.D. 42) appeal to the following data: Eusebius says St. Matthew wrote his Gospel "when he was about to set out for other nations"; Acts 12, 17 tells us that St. Peter left Palestine about A.D. 42 during the persecution of Herod Agrippa I, and this justifies the inference that the other Apostles set out for foreign lands about the same time; tradition, going back as far as Apollonius (about A.D. 210), supports this inference.

The strongest argument from tradition against this opinion is based on a statement of Irenæus which is taken to mean that St. Matthew wrote at the time when St. Peter and St. Paul were at Rome. St. Paul reached Rome only in A.D. 61, and was martyred there with St. Peter in A.D. 67; hence, according to Irenæus, the First Gospel must have been written sometime between A.D. 61 and 67. But this statement of Irenæus' is open to various interpretations and so cannot furnish a solid proof.

66. *The Greek version.* The original Aramaic text of the First Gospel has not survived. It was naturally used only in Palestine where Aramaic was the common language, and it was probably lost soon after the Jewish Christians were scattered throughout various countries in consequence of the national uprising against Rome which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. But the original had been translated into Greek before the end of the first century, for citations from the Greek Version are found in the earliest Christian literature (the Didache, the Epistle of Barnabas, the works of Justin, Polycarp, and Ignatius). That the Greek is substantially the same as the Aramaic original, follows from the use made of it by the Fathers and other early ecclesiastical writers who were aware that St. Matthew wrote in Aramaic, and who quote the Greek as his; hence this version was made by St. Matthew himself or was approved by him, or at least was in substantial conformity with the original Aramaic.

Most non-Catholic critics refuse to admit that our text is a translation, since according to them the style is too pure and elegant for anything but an original; the author, they say, took the Aramaic "discourses" written by St. Matthew and built up the narrative parts around them. This opinion has already been refuted (§ 64). In addition it may be noted that even on this supposition there would be need for considerable translation, since the reported words of our Lord form a very large part of the First Gospel. Hence, before this theory could have any probability it would have to be demonstrated that there is a notable difference in language and style between the "discourses" and the narrative sections in the Greek, and this no one has been able to demonstrate. A work called the "Gospel according to the Hebrews" is referred to by Epiphanius and Jerome. Little definite is known about it, and its relation to St. Matthew's Gospel is disputed. A probable opinion holds that it is the work of early Jewish heretics who, after embracing Christianity, returned to many of their Jewish doctrines and in this way corrupted the faith; they had the Aramaic text of the First Gospel, but modified it to suit their purposes. Others hold that this "Gospel according to the Hebrews" is a purely Apocryphal work.

**67. *The purpose of the First Gospel.*** All four Gospels aim at instructing their readers in the faith by setting forth the life and teachings of our Lord, but each one lays stress upon the points of most importance for its readers. Writing for the Jews, St. Matthew undertook to show that Jesus Christ is the Messias promised in the Old Testament.

**A. The Ancient prophecies.** He is careful to call attention to the fulfillment of the ancient prophecies in Jesus; he cites more than twenty prophecies expressly and alludes to many others. Only five prophecies are cited by St. Mark, and eight by St. Luke, and all of these are found in

the discourses of our Lord except one (Mark 1, 2; Luke 3, 4).

a) *The Virgin Birth*, 1, 22.23 from Isa. 7, 14: "Behold a virgin shall be with child and bring forth a son; and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

b) *Birth in Bethlehem*, 2, 6 from Mich. 5, 2: "And thou Bethlehem the land of Juda art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come forth the Captain that shall rule My people Israel."

c) *Flight into Egypt*, 2, 15 from Osee 11, 1: "Out of Egypt have I called My Son."

d) *Massacre of the Innocents*, 2, 18 from Jer. 31, 15: "A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning; Rachel bewailing her children and would not be comforted, because they are not."

e) *John the Baptist*, 3, 3 from Isa. 40, 3: "A voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His paths."

f) *Christ preaching in Galilee*, 4, 14 from Isa. 9, 1: "Land of Zabulon and land of Nephthalim, the way of the sea beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people that sat in darkness hath seen a great light; and to them that sat in the region of the shadow of death, light is sprung up."

g) *Christ's Miracles*, 8, 17 from Isa. 53, 4: "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases" (cf. Matt. 11, 5 and Isa. 35, 5).

h) *Christ's Preaching in Parables*, 13, 14 from Isa. 6, 9: "By hearing you shall hear and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see and shall not perceive. For the heart of this people is grown gross, and with their ears they have been dull of hearing, and their eyes they have shut; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and be converted, and I should heal them."

13, 35 from Ps. 77, 2: "I will open My mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world."

i) *Christ rebukes the Pharisees*, 15, 8 from Isa. 29, 13: "This people honoreth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain do they worship Me, teaching doctrines and commandments of men."

j) *Triumphal entry into Jerusalem*, 21, 5 from Isa. 62, 11 and Zach. 9, 9: "Tell ye the daughter of Sion: Behold thy King cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of her that is used to the yoke."

k) *The rejection of Christ by Israel*, 21, 42 from Ps. 117, 22: "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. By the Lord this has been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes."

l) *The Passion*, 26, 24 (cf. Ps. 40, 10): "The Son of Man indeed goeth, as it is written of Him." 26, 54 (cf. Isa. 53, 10): "How, then, shall the Scripture be fulfilled that so it must be done?"

26, 56 (cf. Lam. 4, 20): "Now all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled."

27, 9 (cf. Zach. 11, 12): "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the prize of Him that was prized Whom they prized of the children of Israel. And they gave them unto the potter's field, as the Lord appointed to me."

**B. Erroneous ideas.** He combats the erroneous ideas current among the Jews in regard to the Messias.

a) *He shows that the Messias was to be poor and in suffering*; still, to prevent the Jews from being repelled, He also brings out His true glory.

Jesus is born of a poor virgin, then worshiped by the Wise Men; He is forced to flee to Egypt, but is directed by an angel; He receives the baptism of penance, but is at once declared the Son of the Heavenly Father. After being tempted by the devil, He is ministered to by angels; He performs countless miracles and is transfigured in glory;



His passion is clearly foreseen and willingly accepted, and He rises in glory from the dead.

b) *St. Matthew demonstrates that Christ's kingdom is spiritual*, not temporal, but he renders this attractive by insisting on its promised blessings.

The kingdom is called the "kingdom of heaven" thirty times. The forgiveness of sins is the great boon offered in the beginning, 1, 21; in the Sermon on the Mount (5-7) believers are told that, though they will not be freed from earthly misfortunes or trials, they will attain eternal happiness.

c) *While stressing the universality of the kingdom of God*, St. Matthew gives due prominence to the special privileges of the Jews.

He clearly notes the passing of the Old Law and with it the end of the exclusive privileges of the Jews. Yet Christ is come to fulfill not to destroy the Law (5, 17); He Himself is sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (15, 24); in their first mission the Apostles were to confine their labors to the Jews (10, 5.6).

**C. Objections of the Jews.** To well-disposed Jews an obvious objection to accepting Jesus as the Messiah was presented by the unbelief of the great majority of their nation and by the spread of the faith among the Gentiles; the true Messiah, they felt, must be primarily for the chosen people of the Old Testament. St. Matthew meets this objection by demonstrating that this condition is due to the fault of the Jews themselves who sinfully rejected the Messiah while the Gentiles welcomed Him.

The unbelief of the Jews was sinful. Princes and priests tell the Wise Men where Christ is to be found, but they themselves stay in Jerusalem. Jesus again and again foretells that He is to suffer at the hands of the priests, scribes, and ancients (16, 21; 20, 18 ff.). They play the principal rôle in the passion, and after the resurrection they persecute the Apostles with their calumnies. The people themselves

cry out: "His blood be upon us and upon our children" (27, 25). Christ was forced to pronounce woe upon the cities of Galilee (11, 21 ff.).

The wrongheadedness of the Pharisees is made evident. John the Baptist was compelled to reprehend their reliance on their descent from Abraham and their mere external observance of the Law (3, 7 ff.). Christ shows that their justice does not avail, "unless your justice abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (5, 20). His continued disputes with them culminate in the strong denunciation, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you yourselves do not enter in, and those that are going in, you suffer not to enter" (23, 13 ff.).

All this stands in marked contrast to the faith manifested by the Gentiles. The centurion humbly seeks the cure of his servant saying, "Lord, I am not worthy," etc. (8, 5-12); the woman of Canaan confidently implores His help (15, 21 ff.); seeing the miracles, the pagan crowd glorifies the God of Israel (15, 31); at the Cross the Roman centurion and the soldiers acknowledge that this was the Son of God (27, 54).

## Chapter XI

### THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK

68. *Sources of the life of St. Mark.* Act. 12, 12: "And considering, he [Peter] came to the house of Mary the mother of John, who was surnamed Mark."

Act. 12, 25: "And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem (to Antioch of Syria), having fulfilled their ministry, taking with them John, who was surnamed Mark."

Act. 13, 5.13: "And when they [Saul and Barnabas] were come to Salamina, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John also in the ministry. . . . Now when Paul and they that were with him had sailed from Paphos, they came to Perge in Pamphylia. And John departing from them, returned to Jerusalem."

Act. 15, 37-39: "And Barnabas would have taken with them John also, that was surnamed Mark. But Paul desired that he (as having departed from them out of Pamphylia and not gone with them to the work) might not be received. And there arose a dissension so that they departed one from another, and Barnabas indeed taking Mark, sailed to Cyprus."

Col. 4, 10: "Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, saluteth you: and Mark, the cousin-german of Barnabas, touching whom you have received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him."

Other salutations from Mark at Rome are found in Philem. 24; 1 Pet. 5, 13. In 2 Tim. 4, 11 he is to go to Rome with Timothy.

Like St. Matthew, St. Mark had two names, being fre-

quently referred to as John with or without the addition of his surname Mark. He was a cousin of Barnabas, and his mother's house at Jerusalem was a meeting place for the first Christians; it was to her house that St. Peter went after his miraculous deliverance from prison. It is not certain that he was among the disciples during our Savior's public life, though many wish to identify him with the young man who, "casting off the linen cloth" with which he was clothed, fled from the soldiers after the arrest of our Lord (Mark 14, 51.52). The companion of St. Paul and Barnabas during their labors in Cyprus (A.D. 45), he left them at Perge and returned to Jerusalem. As a consequence of this apparent desertion, St. Paul did not want him on the second missionary journey, and so St. Mark went with Barnabas to Cyprus (A.D. 49), while St. Paul with Silas as his companion, journeyed through Syria and Asia Minor. Later, however, St. Paul and St. Mark were reconciled and St. Mark was of great help during the Apostle's first imprisonment at Rome (A.D. 61-63). When St. Paul was once more a prisoner at Rome (about A.D. 66), he wrote to Timothy who was at Ephesus to bring St. Mark to Rome since he could be of service to the Apostle. But St. Mark was more intimately associated with St. Peter than with St. Paul; it seems probable that St. Peter had baptized St. Mark, for he calls him his son. The identity of John Mark with the Mark whom St. Peter calls his son is not altogether certain but is at least highly probable. Since St. Peter had gone to the home of John Mark on his liberation from prison, it is natural to suppose that the reference in the Epistle is to the same person. Besides, Mark was at Rome during St. Paul's first imprisonment there, and the Epistle of St. Peter, containing Mark's greetings, was sent from Rome.

To the information contained in the New Testament, tradition adds that St. Mark founded the church of Alexandria in Egypt and was its first Bishop; the time and manner of his death cannot be clearly determined.

69. *St. Mark is the author of the Second Gospel.*

**A. Explicit external evidence.** This consists in the declarations of early writers that St. Mark wrote the Second Gospel.

a) *Papias*. And the presbyter used to say: Mark, the interpreter of Peter, wrote out with care whatever he had committed to memory, but he did not relate the sayings and deeds of Christ in exact order. For he had neither heard the Lord nor followed Him; but, as I said, he afterwards followed Peter who used to preach the Gospel according to the needs (of his hearers) and not as though he were giving an orderly narrative of the Lord's discourses. So Mark made no mistake in writing some things just as he remembered them. Indeed, his sole aim was to omit nothing that he had heard and to add nothing (Euseb. *H.E.*, III, 39).

b) *Irenæus*: Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, also handed down to us in writing what had been announced by Peter (*Adv. Haer.*, III, 1, 1; cf. II, 10, 6).

c) *Justin* speaks of the "Memoirs of Peter," referring obviously to the Gospel of St. Mark (*Dial. c. Tryph.*, 106).

d) *Tertullian*: Of the Apostles, John and Matthew instill the faith into us, and of apostolic men Luke and Mark renew it. What Mark published is called Peter's, for Mark was his interpreter (*Adv. Marc.*, IV, 2).

e) *Clement of Alexandria*: Many (who had heard Peter's preaching at Rome) urged Mark to write down what Peter had preached, since Mark had already followed Peter for a long time and remembered his words. Mark, therefore, composed his Gospel and gave it to those who were asking him for it (Euseb. *H.E.*, VI, 14; cf. II, 15).

f) *Origen*: The Second Gospel is that according to Mark who composed it as Peter had explained it to him (Euseb. *H.E.*, VI, 25).

g) *Evaluation of the evidence*. See under St. Matthew (§ 63). Tradition testifies clearly that St. Mark is the author of the Second Gospel, and that in writing it he

followed the preaching of St. Peter without trying to give a complete life of our Lord in chronological order. It is not improbable that some of the early Christians were inclined to look with distrust on this Gospel because at times it narrated events in a different order from that to which they were accustomed, and this may have been the reason why the "presbyter," quoted by Papias, wishes to reassure them. This lack of order, however, must not be exaggerated, for St. Luke, who is careful in his arrangement, generally follows the same order as St. Mark in the events common to them both.

Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius tell us that it was at the request of St. Peter's hearers at Rome that St. Mark undertook the task of writing out the discourses of the Apostle; Clement adds that St. Peter neither forbade nor encouraged the work, while Eusebius affirms that he sanctioned its reading in the churches. This discrepancy may be removed on the supposition that St. Peter was at first indifferent but later on gave his approbation.

**B. Implicit external evidence.** It is not easy to detect citations from St. Mark because his Gospel contains very little that is not in St. Matthew or St. Luke, and the early writers usually quote from memory so that the minor distinctions in the narratives are often lost.

Justin says that in the "Memoirs of Peter" he read that the sons of Zebedee were called sons of thunder (cf. Mark 3, 17, where alone this fact is recorded; *Dial. c. Tryph.*, 106, 3; M. 6, 724).

Tatian included St. Mark in his *Diatesseron* or *Harmony*.

This Gospel is preserved in the ancient Latin and Syriac Versions which date back to the second century.

### **C. Internal evidence.**

a) *The author was a Jew.*

(1) *The style* is strongly Semitic. The sentences are simple in construction and joined by *and* or *and immediately*. Repetitions are frequent; e.g., "To what shall

we liken the kingdom of God?" or "to what parable shall we compare it?", 4, 30; "In the resurrection, when they shall rise again," 12, 23; "he began to send them two and two" (in Greek δύο δύο for the usual ἀνά δύο), 6, 7; in "ranks" (in Greek πρᾶσαι πρᾶσαι) 6, 40; Semitic words are used; e.g., "*Boanerges* . . . sons of thunder," 3, 17; "*Talitha cumi* . . . damsel, arise," 5, 41; "*Ephpheta* . . . be thou opened," 7, 34; *corban*, gift, 7, 11; *Rabboni*, master, 10, 51; "*Abba*, Father," 14, 36; *rabbi*, master, 14, 45; "*Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabacthani* . . . My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me," 15, 34.

(2) *Accurate references* to the geography of Palestine are frequent; e.g., "Nazareth of Galilee," 1, 9; "the coasts of Tyre and Sidon," 7, 24; "the coasts of Decapolis," 7, 31; "the mount of Olivet over against the temple," 13, 3.

(3) *Points of religion* proper to the Jews are handled with ease; e.g., Pharisees, 7, 1; Sadducees, 12, 18; first day of the unleavened bread, 14, 12; the Parasceve, the day before the Sabbath, 15, 42.

*b) He wrote for the Gentiles.*

(1) *He takes pains to explain Jewish customs*; e.g., 7, 1-4;

(2) *He forms Greek words* out of Latin ones; e.g., quadrans, κοδράντης (about 1/5 of a cent), 12, 42; centurio, κεντυρίων 15, 39.

(3) *He appeals to miracles* rather than to prophecies, a method adapted to Gentiles who would be unfamiliar with the Old Testament.

*c) He drew his information from eyewitnesses.* Though this is the shortest of the Gospels, it brings out with great care details of time, place, and persons; e.g., 1, 29-35; 1, 40; 2, 2-5, etc.

*d) He was a disciple of St. Peter.* He gives a more complete picture of St. Peter than does any of the other Evangelists, and yet he omits much that redounds to the honor of St. Peter. Besides, the general plan of the Gospel is in

harmony with what we know of St. Peter's preaching from the Acts.

Further arguments are found in the title and in the decision of the Biblical Commission, 1912 (Denz. 2155).

70. *The purpose of St. Mark's Gospel.* Writing for the converted pagans of Rome, St. Mark aims at bringing out strikingly that Jesus is the Son of God. He dwells especially on the supreme dominion which Christ exercised over all things; this dominion He manifested in His miracles and in His power over evil spirits who in reality were the gods of the pagans. Hence, the miracles hold a prominent place in this Gospel and special care is taken in describing them and in establishing the reliability of the men who were selected by God to bear witness to them and to proclaim the doctrines which all men must accept for salvation.

This was the natural way to propose the Gospel to pagans, and St. Mark merely records the preaching of St. Peter at Rome, where, for the most part, the Apostle addressed pagan audiences. Since neither the Scriptures nor the promises concerning the Messias were familiar to them, St. Matthew's method of appealing to the fulfillment of prophecies would have been useless, or at best very indirect. Miracles, however, as manifestations of divine power, would be accepted by them in proof of the claims made by Jesus.

St. Mark omits all that preceded the public life of Christ, for St. Peter was not a witness of these events. He begins with a clear statement of his thesis, "the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." This is followed by the citation of a prophecy concerning John the Baptist, for while not relying on Scripture generally, he does not entirely exclude it. The personal introduction of Jesus is skillfully prepared for by recording the fame of the Baptist and his humble expectation of the mighty One Who was to come after him. At the Baptism of Christ, the Heavenly Father expressly declares that He is His Son. St. Mark next brings on the scene some of the chief witnesses selected by God (Simon



and Andrew, James and John, 1, 16-20) and then takes up the narration of Christ's many miracles, calling attention, as he does throughout his Gospel, to the amazement of those who beheld such marvelous manifestations of power.

**A. The number of miracles.** Despite the fact that his Gospel is shorter than St. Matthew's, he includes all except four of the miracles recorded in the First Gospel and adds four of his own — the demoniac, 1, 23; the deaf-mute, 7, 32; the blind man, 8, 22; the ascension, 16, 19. Besides, he states in general that Jesus cast out many devils, 1, 39; 3, 9-12; that through His power the Apostles did the same, 6, 7, 13; and that He promised His disciples the power of miracles and control over evil spirits, 16, 17-20. He is more circumstantial than St. Matthew in describing the miracles, giving the names of those cured or details of time and place, so as to prevent all doubt.

**B. Special emphasis on the expulsion of demons.** The first miracle recorded is of this nature, 1, 23, and it is accompanied by the demon's testimony to Christ's divinity, "the Holy One of God," while similar testimony is had from other demons, 1, 34; 3, 11, 12; 5, 7. He sums up the whole ministry as consisting in preaching and the casting out of devils, 1, 39, while in St. Matthew (4, 23, 24) it is preaching and healing sickness and all manner of infirmity. The summary takes the same form for the first mission of the Apostles, 6, 7, while in St. Matthew (10, 7, 8) and St. Luke (9, 1, 2) other miraculous powers are included. In the final sending forth of the Apostles, 16, 17, power over demons is placed first; St. Matthew (28, 18 ff.) and St. Luke (24, 46 ff.) mention only teaching. He even tells in 9, 37 of a man who, though not a disciple, cast out devils in the name of Jesus.

**C. The reliability of the witnesses.** The credibility of these miracles is confirmed by insisting on the character and authority of those who bore witness to them. This is in harmony with the idea expressed by St. Peter in address-

ing the first Gentile converts at Cæsarea, when he said that the risen Christ was made manifest "not to all the people, but to witnesses preordained by God" (Act. 10, 41). Jesus frequently rejects the testimony of demons (1, 24.25). He selects certain of His disciples to be Apostles and sends them forth to preach, and He often withdraws from the crowds to be alone with the disciples (1, 35; 3, 7.13 ff.; 4, 10 ff.; 4, 35 ff.; 6, 1 ff.). More frequently than the other Evangelists, St. Mark speaks of our Lord's reprehending the Apostles for their slowness to believe (4, 40; 6, 50; 8, 17; 16, 14); evidently, then, they were not credulous, but rather yielded only to overwhelming evidence.

**71. *Integrity of the text.*** The closing verses of St. Mark (16, 9-20) present a problem for the textual critic. Their inspiration and canonicity are certain; they are covered by the decree of the Council of Trent condemning all who do not accept the entire Scriptures with all their parts (Denz. 783, 784), and the Biblical Commission (June 26, 1912, Denz. 2156) declares that the arguments against these verses do not justify the statement that they are not to be received as inspired and canonical. In the same decree the Commission declares that these arguments do not even demonstrate that St. Mark is not the author of these verses; this seems to leave the question of authorship open to this extent that, while denying demonstrative force to the arguments against St. Mark's having written these verses, one may still attribute to them a certain amount of probability. As usual, the arguments for and against the verses are drawn from external and internal evidence.

The external evidence favors the authenticity of these verses. Though they are not found in B and S (two of the most ancient uncials) nor in some of the early translations (the Syriac Sinaiticus, many copies of the Sahidic, most of the Armenian), yet they are in the uncials A, C, D, and later ones and in the Old Latin, the Vulgate, the Syriac Cureton and Peshitta, the Bohairic, and the Gothic transla-

tions. Eusebius and St. Jerome assert that these verses are lacking in most of the Greek manuscripts, but their testimony is offset by Irenæus who expressly refers these verses to St. Mark and by Tatian who included them in his harmony; St. Justin, too, appears to have known them, since he probably refers to 16, 19 (*Dial.* 108, 2).

The internal evidence is less favorable. The connection with the preceding part is loose; these verses seem to be a mere summary of the events narrated by the other Gospels; the vivid description characteristic of the rest of St. Mark is replaced by a dry chronicle, while the diction also shows strange differences (the recurrent *καί* is absent and many new words appear). This evidence is far from convincing, but it is strong enough to excite suspicion. It is explained in various ways. Some hold that the original ending of the Gospel was lost and that the present text was added later by some unknown author; if this author was inspired, the inspiration and canonicity are not affected. Others hold that St. Mark closed his Gospel at 16, 8; but this verse does not give a satisfactory ending and hence it seems unreasonable to suppose that St. Mark intended to end in this manner; it remains possible, however, to suppose that he was forced to break off his account here for some reason and that he added our ending later or that someone else was inspired to complete his work. While the matter remains obscure, the evidence is not strong enough to exclude St. Mark as the writer of these closing verses. To the objections drawn from the style may be opposed some undoubted Marcan characteristics in these verses. Prominence is given to the power to cast out evil spirits (9.17), to the incredulity of the disciples (11-14), and to the working of miracles (17-20), while the tendency to brevity is quite in Mark's style (cf. the temptations of our Lord in, 1, 12.13).

## Chapter XII

### THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE

*72. Sources of the life of St. Luke.* Act. 16, 10-12: "Immediately we sought to go into Macedonia . . . and we came . . . to Philippi."

Act. 20, 5.6: "These, going before, stayed for us at Troas. But we sailed from Philippi after the days of the azymes and came to them to Troas in five days. . . ."

Col. 4, 14: "Luke, the most dear physician, saluteth you."

Philem. 24: "(There salute thee) Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow laborers."

2 Tim. 4, 11: "Only Luke is with me."

St. Luke was a Gentile convert. The salutation from him in Col. 4, 14 is placed after the salutations from those who at the time were St. Paul's only Jewish helpers (Col. 4, 10.11). Tradition says that he was practicing his profession as physician at Antioch in Syria when the Gospel was first preached there and that he was among the converts made by St. Paul and Barnabas. In Act. 16, 10, the narrative is taken up for the first time in the first person plural, indicating that St. Luke then joined St. Paul at Troas and accompanied him to Philippi in Macedonia. Since the third person is again used for the events after the Apostle's sojourn in Philippi (Act. 16, 40 ff.), it seems that St. Luke remained at Philippi to assist the newly founded church there. When St. Paul again visited Philippi on his return from his third missionary journey, the first person plural is once more used (Act. 20, 6), and is continued till the end of the Acts. Hence, St. Luke was at Philippi some seven years, and then was St. Paul's constant companion up to the close of the

Apostle's first imprisonment at Rome (Act. 28, 16.30.31). In all probability he was with the Apostle on his journeys during the interval between his first and second imprisonments, for he is his faithful companion at Rome just before St. Paul's martyrdom (2 Tim. 4, 11). His subsequent career is unknown, but a tradition from the fourth century includes him among the martyrs.

**73. St. Luke, the companion of St. Paul, is the author of the Third Gospel.**

**A. Explicit external evidence.**

a) *Muratorian Fragment*: "The third book of the Gospel [is] according to Luke. Luke the physician wrote it."

b) *Irenæus*: "Luke also, the follower of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him [Paul] (*Adv. Haer.*, III, 1).

c) *Tertullian*: (as under St. Matthew, § 63).

d) *Origen*: "The Third Gospel is that according to Luke, which is praised by Paul and was written for the benefit of the Gentiles" (Euseb., *H.E.*, VI, 25).

e) *Evaluation of this testimony*. Cf. under St. Matthew (§ 63).

**B. Implicit external evidence.**

The Third Gospel was used by the writer of the Didache, Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Justin; and by the heretics Basilides, Valentinus, Marcion; and by Tatian in his *Diatesseron*.

It is found in the ancient Latin and Syriac translations.

**C. Internal evidence.**

a) The author was very familiar with the doctrines of St. Paul and with his way of speaking.

Like St. Paul, he often commends the universality of the Gospel and the necessity of faith. St. Paul: Rom. 1, 16 "For it [the Gospel] is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and to the Greek." St. Luke: 2, 30-32, "Because my eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a

light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel"; 7, 9 (seeing the faith of the centurion, Jesus said) "Amen, I say to you, I have not found so great faith not even in Israel."

Like St. Paul, he manifests tender consideration for the Jews. St. Paul: Rom. 9, 3, "for I wished myself to be anathema from Christ, for my brethren; who are my kinsmen according to the flesh." St. Luke: 13, 6-9, the parable of the barren fig tree which is given another chance to bear fruit; 19, 41, Jesus weeping over Jerusalem; 23, 28; 7, 9 compared with Matt. 8, 10-12; 20, 17.18 compared with Matt. 21, 43.

St. Luke agrees with St. Paul in his account of the Eucharist (22, 19.20; 1 Cor. 11, 24.25) and of the appearances after the resurrection (24, 34-36; 1 Cor. 15, 5).

b) The author seems to have been a physician, for he often uses technical medical terms (cf. in the Greek text: 4, 38; 5, 18; 14, 2; 21, 34). That St. Luke was a physician is clear from Col. 4, 14, "Luke, the most dear physician, saluteth you."

c) The author was the companion of St. Paul. By comparing Luke 1, 1-4 with Act. 1, 1, we see that the same person wrote the Gospel and the Acts, while from Act. 16, 10-17, it is clear that the author of the Acts was a companion of St. Paul, since he there carries on the narrative in the first person plural ("we").

Further arguments are found in the title and in the decision of the Biblical Commission, 1912 (Denz. 2155).

**74. *The purpose of St. Luke's Gospel.*** Addressing both Jews and Gentiles, St. Luke presents Jesus as the Savior of all men. The disciple and companion of St. Paul would naturally have such an aim. In the churches founded by St. Paul there was usually a Jewish minority, and their opposition compelled the Apostle to contend vigorously for the principle that Jews and Gentiles were on an equality in the Church, and that, once admitted to the Christian com-

munity, the Gentile was in no way inferior to the Jewish convert. This is the principle of "the universality of salvation"; Christ came to save all men; there is no longer any distinction such as existed under the Old Law, no longer Jew or Gentile, Greek or barbarian, bond or free, but all men are equal, all are called to share in the redemption brought by Christ. This is the central doctrine of St. Paul, and the central theme of St. Luke in his Gospel.

There is, therefore, in the Third Gospel a mingling of two elements, Jewish and Gentile, a presentation of what would have its stronger appeal now to the Jew, now to the Gentile.

**A. The Jews.** Of special Jewish appeal are the opening chapters. What precedes the public life of Christ is filled with allusions to the Old Testament. Due honor is paid to the privileges of the Jews; in the Magnificat, the Benedictus, and the Nunc Dimittis the Jews are evidently the chosen people of God, and on entering the world the divine Savior comes to them directly, and brings to their fulfillment the promises made to the Patriarchs; Jesus is of the family of David and hence, according to the flesh, He belongs to Israel.

Again, in 4, 16 ff., when Jesus begins His public preaching, His ministry is represented as fulfilling the prophecy of Isaias. Descent from Abraham is acknowledged as giving a special claim to the blessings of the Savior in 13, 11-16, where the woman cured of a long-standing infirmity is referred to by Christ as "this daughter of Abraham," and in 19, 9, where our Lord says that salvation is come to the house of Zacheus because he is a son of Abraham.

The authority of the Old Law is taught by Christ in 16, 17, "it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fall," and its utility in 16, 29, where the rich man in torment is told by Abraham that his brethren have Moses and the prophets to instruct them so that they may avoid being cast into the same torments. The parable of

the barren fig tree in 13, 6-9 teaches God's merciful tolerance of the unbelief of the Jews; Christ's love for the Jews is clear from His weeping over Jerusalem at the thought of its approaching destruction (19, 41) and from His prayer for them on the cross (23, 34). These last two events are found in St. Luke alone.

**B. The Gentiles.** Even more evident are the elements with stronger appeal to the Gentiles. In the first two chapters, where the Jewish features are most obvious, the Gentiles could see the miraculous preparation for the Divine Infant. In 2, 31, Simeon greets the Child as the Savior of all peoples and light for the enlightenment of the Gentiles. The genealogy of Chapter 3 is carried up to Adam, not merely to Abraham as in Matt. 1. The Gentiles could recognize themselves in the poor, the captives, and the blind for whose sake the Redeemer had come (4, 18 ff.), and in the examples given in 4, 24 ff. they could learn the care God always took of the Gentiles.

St. Luke alone mentions the mission of the seventy-two disciples (Chap. 10); they represent the nations of the earth as the twelve Apostles do the tribes of Israel. Many examples of Christ's universal mercy are recorded by St. Luke alone — e.g., toward the Samaritans when James and John wanted to call down fire to destroy them (9, 52-56); in the parable of the Good Samaritan (10, 30-37); in the healing of the ten lepers where only the stranger or foreigner among them returns to give thanks (17, 11); in the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Groat, and the Prodigal Son (Chap. 15); and in the frequent manifestations of mercy to sinners and publicans (7, 33-50; 18, 10). St. Luke also omits or softens down expressions which might prove offensive to the Gentiles — e.g., when the Apostles were first sent to preach, there is no mention of the prohibition to go to the Gentiles (9, 23; cf. Matt. 10, 5); in 6, 33 he has "sinners also do this" where Matt. 5, 47 has "the heathens."

The whole matter is concisely illustrated in 24, 47 where



the final mission of the Apostles is to preach penance and the remission of sin in Christ's name unto all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

## Chapter XIII

### THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN

*75. Sources of the life of St. John.* Numerous references, in the first place, are made to St. John in the Sacred Scriptures.

John 1, 35-41: "The next day again John [the Baptist] stood and two of His disciples. And beholding Jesus walking, he saith: Behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples heard Him speak; and they followed Jesus," etc.

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Luke 9, 49.50: "And John, answering, said: Master, we saw a certain man casting out devils in Thy name: and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said to him: Forbid him not; for he that is not against you is for you."

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Mark 3, 17: "And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and He named them Boanerges, which is the sons of thunder."

Luke 8, 51: "And when He was come to the house [of Jairo], He suffered not any man to go in with Him, but Peter, and James, and John, and the father and mother of the maiden."

Matt. 17, 1-9: "And after six days Jesus taketh unto Him Peter and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart. And He was transfigured before them," etc.

Matt. 20, 20-28 (Ambition of the sons of Zebedee).

John 13, 23: "Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples whom Jesus loved."

Matt. 26, 36 ff.: "Then Jesus came with them into a country place which is called Gethsemani. And He said to His disciples: Sit you here, till I go yonder and pray. And taking with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad."

John 18, 15.16: "And Simon Peter followed Jesus: and so did another disciple. And that disciple was known to the high priest and went in with Jesus into the court of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without. The other disciple, therefore, who was known to the high priest, went out, and spoke to the portress, and brought in Peter."

John 19, 26.27: "When Jesus, therefore, had seen His mother and the disciple standing, whom He loved, He saith to His mother: Woman, behold thy son. After that He saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own."

John 20, 2-10: "She [Mary Magdalen] ran, therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved and saith to them: They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid Him. Peter, therefore, went out, and that other disciple, and they came to the sepulcher. And they both ran together, and that other disciple did outrun Peter and came first to the sepulcher. And when he stooped down, he saw the linen cloths lying; but yet he went not in. Then cometh

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Simon Peter, following him, and went into the sepulcher. . . . Then that other disciple also went in, who came first to the sepulcher: and he saw and believed. For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. The disciples, therefore, departed again to their home."

John 21, 1-24: "After this, Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias. . . . Simon Peter said to them: I go afishing. They say to him: We also come with thee. . . . But when morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore: Yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. . . . That disciple, therefore, whom Jesus loved, said to Peter: It is the Lord. Simon Peter, when he heard that it was the Lord, girt his coat about him (for he was naked) and cast himself into the sea. But the other disciples came in the ship (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits) dragging the net with fishes. . . . Jesus saith to them: Come and dine. And none of them who were at meat, durst ask Him: Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord. . . . Peter turning about, saw that disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also leaned on His breast at supper and said: Lord, who is he that shall betray Thee? Him, therefore, when Peter had seen, he saith to Jesus: Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith to him: So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? Follow thou Me. This saying, therefore, went abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die. And Jesus did not say to him: He should not die; but, so I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? This is the disciple who giveth testimony of these things and hath written these things."

Act. 3, 1-4, 23: Accompanied by St. John, St. Peter cures the lame man at the temple gate, preaches to the people, is arrested by the Jewish authorities, is cast into prison, refuses to cease preaching, and is dismissed with threats.

Act. 8, 14-25: "Now when the Apostles, who were in Jerusalem, had heard that Samaria had received the word of



God, they sent unto them Peter and John. . . . Then they laid their hands upon them: and they received the Holy Ghost. . . . And they indeed having testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the Gospel to many countries of the Samaritans."

Gal. 2, 9: "And when they had known the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship: that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision."

Apoc. 1, 9: "I, John, your brother and your partner in tribulation, and in the kingdom, and patience in Christ Jesus, was in the island which is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus."

St. John was the son of Zebedee and Salome and the brother of St. James the Greater. He had been a disciple of John the Baptist and one of the two who were the first to act on the testimony of the Baptist that Jesus was "the Lamb of God." After that initial interview with our Lord, St. John probably brought his brother to Jesus just as Andrew brought his brother Peter. With the other early disciples he was present at the miracle of Cana (John 2, 1 ff.). Shortly afterwards, together with his brother and Peter and Andrew, he was called to give up everything and attach himself to our Lord. He was one of the three favorite disciples whom Jesus took with Him at the raising of the daughter of Jäirus, at the Transfiguration, and at the Agony in the Garden; our Lord's special affection for him marked him out as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." It was to him, the only one of the disciples standing at the foot of the Cross, that Jesus committed His Mother. After the resurrection, he accompanied St. Peter to the tomb, and at the sea of Tiberias he received the intimation that he would die a natural death in contrast to the martyrdom foretold for St. Peter.

With St. Peter he enjoyed the honor of being the first

of the disciples to suffer for the Faith, being cast into prison in Jerusalem. When the Gospel had been preached in Samaria by Philip the deacon, he and St. Peter were sent there to confirm the new converts. Returning to Jerusalem, he remained there with the other Apostles till the general dispersal of the Apostles during the persecution of Herod Agrippa or perhaps till the Christian communities were broken up shortly before the destruction of the city. St. Paul mentions him along with St. Peter and St. James the Less as pillars of the Church at Jerusalem about A.D. 52. He himself refers to his having been banished for the Faith to the island of Patmos.

Tradition adds that, after leaving Jerusalem, he dwelt at Ephesus, was condemned under Domitian (A.D. 81-96) to be plunged into a cask of boiling oil from which, however, he came forth uninjured, was banished to Patmos under Nerva (A.D. 96-98), where he wrote the Apocalypse, returned to Ephesus, and died there at a very advanced age.

**76. St. John the Apostle is the author of the Fourth Gospel.**

**A. Explicit external evidence.**

a) *The Muratorian Fragment* (ninth line): of the Fourth Gospel John is the author.

b) *Irenæus*: Afterwards John, the disciple of the Lord, who also reclined upon His breast, published a Gospel himself while he was at Ephesus (*Adv. Haer.*, III, 1, 1).

c) *Tertullian*: (see under St. Matthew, § 63).

d) *Theophilus of Antioch*: These things the Holy Scriptures teach us, and all the inspired writers, among whom John says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God" (*Ad Autol.*, II, 22; M. 6, 1088).

e) *Clement of Alexandria*: But last of all John, seeing that what pertained to the Body of Christ had been handed down in the other Gospels, wrote a spiritual Gospel under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and at the request of his friends (*Euseb. H.E.*, VI, 14).

f) *Origen*: The last Gospel is that according to John (Euseb. *H.E.*, VI, 25).

g) *Evaluation of this evidence* (see under St. Matthew, § 63); Theophilus was the seventh Bishop of Antioch and wrote about A.D. 181.

**B. Implicit evidence.** The Fourth Gospel was used by St. Ignatius, St. Polycarp, Hermas in his *Pastor*, and Tatian in his *Diatesseron*; and by such early heretics as Valentinus, the Alogi, Heracleon; and by the writers of the ancient Apocryphal Gospels.

It is preserved in the ancient Latin and Syriac Versions.

**C. Internal evidence.**

a) The author was a Palestinian Jew, for he was well acquainted with the customs of the Jews, with Palestine, and with Jerusalem; cf. 4, 9; 3, 23; 5, 2.

b) He was an eyewitness, for he gives the words of the persons concerned and minute details of time and place; cf. 1, 29.35.43; 19, 35.

c) He was an Apostle, for he has an intimate knowledge of the deeds, words, and feelings of the Apostles, and speaks as though he knew even our Lord's thoughts; cf. 1, 35 ff.; 6, 6.65.71.

d) He was the beloved disciple; cf. 13, 23; 19, 25.26.35; 21, 20-24.

e) He was the Apostle St. John:

(1) He was the beloved disciple; hence, he must have been Peter, James, or John, for these alone are the favored disciples. He was not Peter, for the beloved disciple is clearly distinguished from Peter in John 21, 7.20. He was not James, for James had been martyred long before this Gospel was written (Act. 12, 2), and his early death would contradict the long life of the beloved disciple in John 21, 20-23. Therefore, the beloved disciple, the author of this Gospel, must be St. John.

(2) He was the companion and friend of Peter; cf. 13, 24 (at the Last Supper); 18, 15.16 (he gets Peter permission

to enter the court of the high priest); 20, 2-10 (Peter and the beloved disciple go to the sepulcher); 21, 20, 21 (Peter asks about the future of this disciple). It was St. John who was this companion and friend of Peter; cf. Act., Chaps. 3 and 4; 8, 14 (Peter and John go to Samaria).

(3) This Gospel is silent about John the son of Zebedee; this suggests that the writer is John himself. There is the same silence about his brother James and their mother, especially in 19, 25 (concerning those at the foot of the Cross), though Matt. 27, 56, mentions "the mother of the sons of Zebedee" and Mark 15, 40, has "Salome." It is significant, too, that he always speaks of John the Baptist simply as John, never calling him the Baptist, while throughout this Gospel Peter is Simon Peter, Thomas is Didymus, and Judas is the Iscariot or the son of Simon; the reason must have been that he expected his readers to know that the writer was John the Apostle.

(4) Additional arguments are provided by the title and the decision of the Biblican Commission, 1907 (Denz. 2110).

**77. *The purpose of St. John's Gospel.*** St. John proves the divinity of Jesus, demonstrating from His deeds and especially from His words that He is the Son of God. He wrote much later than the Synoptics and at a time when heresies had arisen attacking Christ's divinity; St. John aims at completing the Synoptics for the purpose of refuting these nascent heresies.

He narrates fewer miracles than the Synoptics, giving only nine as compared with over twenty in each of them. But he has many general references to miracles; e.g., "A great multitude followed Him, because they saw the miracles which He did on them that were diseased" (6, 2); "there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written" (21, 25). Besides, he supposes his readers to be acquainted with the Synoptics.

But the characteristic method of St. John is to present our Lord's own testimony to His divinity and the professions of faith made by the Baptist, the Apostles, and the whole people. In long-established Churches such testimony had more authority than mere miracles and was better adapted to refute the novel heretical doctrines.

These heresies revolved around erroneous notions concerning our Lord. In general, they made a distinction between Jesus, on the one hand, and Christ, or the Son of God, on the other; according to them Jesus was a mere man, and so the Word or the Son of God was not made flesh. Cerinthus held that Christ united Himself with Jesus at the baptism of our Lord and withdrew before the passion so that only the man Jesus suffered on the Cross. The Ebionites taught that the man Jesus observed the Law so perfectly that He became the Christ. Clear reference to such theories is made in the First Epistle of St. John which is admitted to be a sort of preface to his Gospel: "every spirit that dissolveth Jesus is not of God" (1 John 4, 3).

St. John sweeps away all such heretical teachings, not by a direct exposition of their errors, but by the more effective method of clearly presenting the true doctrine that the Word was made flesh, that Jesus is truly the Son of God, that in His passion and death were fulfilled the prophecies concerning Christ, the Messiah.

78. *The historicity of the Gospel according to St. John.* The most vehement attacks of the rationalistic critics have been directed against the historicity of this Gospel; they claim it is in open contradiction to the Synoptics. Since St. John emphasizes the divinity of Christ, it is not difficult to understand why unbelieving critics wish to get rid of his Gospel.

The alleged contradictions between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics may be grouped under three headings:

A. **Geographical contradictions.** The Synoptics

describe Christ as laboring chiefly in Galilee, while St. John makes Judea and especially Jerusalem the chief scene of His labors.

**B. Chronological contradictions.** The Synoptics limit the public life to one year, while St. John draws it out to over three years.

**C. Christological contradictions.** In the Synoptics, Christ is pictured as a man, while in St. John He appears always as God.

Even the casual reader can note marked differences between the Synoptics and St. John, but it is quite another thing to assert that these differences are irreconcilable and amount to contradictions requiring the rejection of the Fourth Gospel as a historical document.

Taking the arguments of the critics in general, we may reply that the differences pointed out, insofar as they are true, were known and discussed in the Church almost from the beginning. Still, far from lessening the reliance placed upon the Fourth Gospel, this rather increased it. Hence both the genuinity and historicity of this Gospel must rest upon solid reasons, otherwise its divergences from the other Gospels would have led to its rejection.

Many of the differences are due to St. John's desire to supply matters omitted in the Synoptics or to complete their concise narratives so as to prevent false deductions from being drawn from them. For example, to give a proper perspective of the early ministry in Galilee, he notes carefully the first and second miracles performed there (John 2, 11; 4, 54) and the time of Christ's previous preaching in Judea (3, 22-24, "John was not yet cast into prison").

### 79. *The geographical differences.*

The argument of the critics:

In the Synoptics Christ begins His ministry in Galilee and there calls His first disciples (Mark 4, 12.18.23). After preaching there, He goes north to Tyre (Matt. 15, 21; Mark 7, 24) and to Cæsarea Philippi (Matt. 16, 13). Finally, turn-

ing south, He comes to Jerusalem for the first time just before His passion and death (Matt. 19, 1).

In St. John Christ calls His first disciples in Judea (1, 35 ff.) and there teaches and baptizes (3, 22; 4, 1). He goes to Jerusalem five times and labors there (2, 13; 5, 1; 7, 10; 10, 22; 12, 12). His visits to Galilee are all brief (2, 1-12; 4, 3-43-54; 6; 7, 1-9).

Answer to these arguments:

It was perfectly natural for our Lord to begin His ministry in Judea where John the Baptist had prepared the way for His coming. The Synoptics do not say that He did no preaching before opening His work in Galilee. The calling of the first disciples in St. John was only temporary; afterwards, as the Synoptics narrate, they were called upon to give up all else and devote themselves entirely to following the Master.

In the Synoptics there are abundant indications that Jesus was often in Judea:

a) Matt. 4, 25. The crowds flocking to hear Jesus from Judea show that Jesus was known there.

b) The Synoptics imply that there was a considerable interval between the temptations of our Lord and His subsequent journeying to Galilee. At the time of Christ's baptism, John enjoyed the highest honor, and so it is not likely that he was thrown into prison immediately afterwards (cf. John 4, 1, where it is implied that the reason for John's arrest was that he had excited the envy of the Pharisees). Besides, at this time it is said that Jesus "retired into Galilee," Matt. 4, 12; this cannot mean that He went directly to Galilee from the desert, for His purpose is to avoid His enemies and the desert would have been safer than Galilee; the Greek verb used (*ἀνεχώρησεν*) means to go to a safer or more secluded place (cf. Matt. 14, 13, where the same verb is used when Jesus retires into a desert place on hearing that John the Baptist had been executed by Herod Antipas).

c) Our Lord was accustomed to draw His examples from His immediate surroundings. In Luke 10, 30, the parable of the Good Samaritan is laid in the vicinity of Jerusalem; in Luke 13, 1-4, the Galileans were killed by Pilate in Jerusalem, and the tower which fell upon others was in Siloe just outside the same city.

d) In Luke 10, 38.39, our Lord visits the home of Martha and Mary; they lived in Bethania, near Jerusalem (cf. John 12, 1-3).

e) On approaching Jerusalem shortly before His passion our Lord exclaims, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered together thy children . . . and thou wouldst not" (Matt. 23, 37; Luke, 13, 34). The context makes it impossible to regard this as a mere wish; it must have included actual and repeated efforts to convert the city.

f) In the accounts of the passion there are many hints that Jesus had been in Jerusalem often; e.g., the owners of the ass and the supper room knew Him (Luke 19, 29; 22, 11).

g) Since the public ministry lasted several years, our Lord, Who came to fulfill the Law, must have gone to Jerusalem often for the prescribed feasts.

St. John, in turn, indicates long stays in Galilee:

At the time when Jesus passes through Samaria on His way to begin His teaching in Galilee, there are still four months remaining before the harvest (4, 35) which came after the Pasch; Jesus remains in Galilee till about the paschal time (5, 1) and so must have been there about three months.

In John 6, 1, Jesus is in Galilee surrounded by crowds who have seen His miracles and the Pasch is near (6, 4); hence, there is an interval of nearly a year from the events of Chapter 5 and this leaves time for much of the Galilean ministry of the Synoptics.

In John 7, 3, Jesus is urged to go to Judea that they may



"see Thy works"; hence, He must have been performing miracles in Galilee. The feast then approaching was that of the Tabernacles which was held in September; hence, Jesus must have spent the preceding five months (from the Pasch to the Feast of the Tabernacles) in Galilee.

### 80. *The chronological differences.*

The arguments of the critics:

In the Synoptics, Jesus begins His ministry after the imprisonment of John the Baptist (Matt. 4, 12) and preaches for only one year up to the first and last Pasch.

In St. John, Jesus begins His ministry before the imprisonment of John the Baptist (3, 24.26) and preaches for several years, since several Paschs occur (2, 13; 5, 1; 6, 4; 13, 1).

Answer to these arguments:

St. John speaks of the beginning of the ministry in Judea which preceded that in Galilee to which the Synoptics refer.

The Synoptics imply that the public life lasted for more than one year.

a) Between Matt. 4, 11 and 4, 12, there is an interval (see the foregoing on the geographical differences, *b*); it was then, before the imprisonment of John the Baptist, that Jesus preached in Judea.

b) In Luke 6, 1.2, the disciples are accused by the Pharisees because they pluck the grain on the Sabbath, and we are told this is the "second first Sabbath." The term "second first Sabbath" is an enigma, but it is generally agreed that it refers to some Sabbath after the Pasch. Here, then, is a Pasch different from that of the passion. Besides, the accusation is merely that they violated the Sabbath, but if this occurred before the Pasch, the Pharisees would have brought forward the more serious charge of eating the grain before the first fruits had been offered in the Temple, since this offering was made at the Pasch.

c) In Mark 6, 39, at the first multiplication of the loaves the people sit on the green grass; grass is green in Palestine

only during the springtime, for after that no rain falls till about October and everything dries up. This spring cannot be the one immediately before the Pasch of the passion.

d) The events narrated by the Synoptics are too many, too varied, and too complicated to have occurred in a single year.

e) In Luke 13, 6, the fig tree from which fruit had been sought in vain for three years probably symbolizes the duration of our Lord's efforts to convert the nation.

## 81. *The Christological differences.*

### A. **The discourses of our Lord.**

The arguments of the critics:

In the Synoptics Jesus addresses the crowds on moral or eschatological subjects developed on an easy and natural plan and in a simple, popular style with many parables; and when other speakers are introduced, they speak each in his own way.

In St. John Jesus addresses individuals or a small group of the leading men on the deepest mysteries of religion (such as the Trinity, His own divinity) developed according to a fixed scheme and in a philosophical or allegorical style, and all the speakers introduced speak in the manner of the author of the Gospel.

Answer to these arguments:

a) In the Synoptics Jesus often addresses individuals or small groups of the Pharisees; cf. Matt. 8, 20; 19, 16; Luke 19, 1; Matt. 15, 1; 16, 1.

In St. John He often addresses the crowds; cf. 6, 1-60; 7, 14-44; 10, 41.

b) In the Synoptics the divinity of Christ is clearly taught (see B, following).

In St. John moral and eschatological subjects are handled, cf. 14, 15; 15, 12; 11, 23-27.

c) In the Synoptics the subjects are at times developed on the fixed scheme supposed to be peculiar to St. John; cf. Matt. 16, 5.

In St. John the subjects are at times developed on the easy and natural plan supposed to be confined to the Synoptics; cf. 1, 38-51; 4, 47; 5, 6-47.

*d)* In the Synoptics the allegorical style occurs; cf. Matt. 3, 12; 4, 19; 5, 13-16.

In St. John parables occur; cf. 10, 1, with its application in 10, 7-18; 15, 4-6.

*e)* The strict uniformity of diction supposed to be found in the Fourth Gospel is greatly exaggerated. There is a marked difference between the dialogue with Nicodemus in Chapter 3 and that with the man born blind in 9, 7-35-38. The simple directness of such expressions as are found in John 5, 8, and 6, 20, is like that in Mark 2, 9, and Matt. 14, 27. Besides, it is obvious that both the Synoptics and St. John had to translate from Aramaic into Greek and consequently each would show peculiarities of diction in his translation.

### **B. The picture of Jesus.**

According to the critics:

In the Synoptics Jesus appears everywhere as a mere man; He is not acknowledged as the Messiah till Peter's profession of faith (Matt. 16, 16), and He Himself never openly claims to be the Messiah until He is brought to trial before the Sanhedrin.

In St. John Jesus always acts as God (e.g., 2, 24; 6, 64) and is acknowledged as such from the beginning (e.g., 1, 15.29.41.49); He Himself repeatedly asserts His claim to divinity (e.g., 1, 51; 3, 11; 4, 25.26).

In reality:

In the Synoptics the divinity of Christ is clearly manifested. The history of His infancy in St. Matthew and St. Luke represents Him as the Son of God. At His baptism He is declared to be the well-beloved Son of God (Matt. 3, 17); He exercises the divine power of forgiving sins (Matt. 9, 2.3); the Father has given Him everything (Matt.

11, 27); He will come in the glory of His Father (Matt. 16, 27); He is the Son of the living God (Matt. 16, 16; 26, 64).

In St. John the human nature of Jesus is in no way obscured. There is mention of His birth (1, 14), of His native land and of His foster father (1, 45), of His mother (2, 1), and of His relatives (7, 3). He feels fatigue and thirst (4, 6), uses knowledge derived from experience (4, 1), cherishes the friendship of Lazarus and his family (11, 3), sheds tears (11, 35), is distressed (12, 27; 13, 21), suffers the pains of His passion, dies, and is buried (19, 28.30.42).

### C. The miracles.

According to the critics:

In the Synoptics the miracles are performed out of pity and after a request for help; they are narrated simply.

In St. John the miracles are spontaneous exhibitions of power and are narrated with great exaggeration.

In reality:

In the Synoptics there are miracles without any request preceding them (e.g., the miraculous draught of fishes, Luke 5, 4-10; the raising of the son of the widow of Naim, Luke 7, 11).

In St. John Jesus takes pity on the infirm man in 5, 6, and on the blind man of 9, 1. At Cana He acts at the request of the Blessed Virgin (2, 1-11); the Ruler of Capharnaum pleads in behalf of his son (4, 47.49); the sisters of Lazarus seek the help of Jesus (11, 3.21.22.32). The multiplication of the loaves and the walking on the water (6, 5-19) take place under the same circumstances as in the Synoptics. The charge of exaggeration is utterly unfounded; St. John gives fewer miracles than the Synoptics, he does not mention the women and children at the multiplication of the loaves nor the walking of St. Peter in connection with Christ's walking upon the water, and the four miracles found only in his Gospel are in no way more marvelous than the miracles narrated by the Synoptics (compare the changing of water into wine with the multi-

plication of the loaves; the cure of the ruler's son with the cure of the centurion's servant, Matt. 8, 5; the cure of the blind man with that of the blind men in Matt. 20, 29; the raising of Lazarus with that of the son of the widow of Naim in Luke 7, 11).



**PART III**  
**EXEGESIS OF THE GOSPELS**





## Chapter XIV

### INTRODUCTION

#### 82. *The geography of Palestine.*

**A. Location and area.** Palestine is situated in north latitude  $30^{\circ} 31' - 33^{\circ} 18'$  and longitude east of Greenwich  $34^{\circ} 15' - 36^{\circ}$ . This places it about the same distance north of the equator as the State of Alabama. Its boundaries in general are: on the west, the Mediterranean Sea; on the north, Syria; on the east, the deserts of Syria and Arabia; on the south, Arabia Petrea. The territory actually occupied by the Jews varied at different periods; the northern and eastern boundaries are particularly hard to define. A line drawn eastward from the mouth of the Leontes River (the Litany or Nahr el Kasimiya) represents fairly the boundary on the north. In Scriptural language the extent north to south was indicated by the phrase "from Dan to Bersabee," Dan being at the southern base of Mount Hermon, and Bersabee some 25 miles southwest of Hebron. The total area is about 9,700 square miles, so that Palestine is a little larger than the State of Vermont and less than one sixth the size of Illinois (56,650 sq. mi.).

**B. Divisions.** Geographically, Palestine may be divided into (a) the Valley of the Jordan and the Dead Sea; (b) the country east of them; (c) the country west of them; (d) the country to the south.

a) *The valley of the Jordan and the Dead Sea.* The river Jordan rises near the northern boundary of Palestine in the foothills of Mt. Hermon and, flowing almost directly south, cuts the country in two. It empties into the Dead Sea, and its valley, including the Dead Sea, is about 175 miles in

length. This valley forms one of the most remarkable depressions on the face of the earth. It is about 1,800 feet above sea level where the river rises in the hills, but the surface of the Dead Sea is 1,292 feet below the level of the sea. The swampy lake of El-hule in the north is 7 feet above sea level, but the Lake of Genesareth, only some 10 miles south, is 682 feet below sea level, and as a consequence the river is exceedingly swift. From the Lake of Genesareth to the Dead Sea the distance is about 185 miles along the innumerable windings of the stream, but only about 65 miles in a direct line. The river is about 100 feet broad, but becomes shallower and wider as it approaches the Dead Sea. The valley itself varies from 2 to 14 miles in width and rises in terraces from the thick foliage along the river bed to the barren hills that slope up to the mountains flanking it throughout.

The Lake of Genesareth is pear-shaped, 13 miles long, 7 miles wide, and about 65 feet deep; east and west it is inclosed by hills but to the northwest the encircling hills are broken by a plain formerly noted for its beauty and fertility. There is an abundance of fish in the lake, and sudden, violent storms are of frequent occurrence. The Dead Sea is about 50 miles long by 10 miles wide with a depth varying from 1,285 feet at the northern end to about  $\frac{1}{2}$  foot at the southern end. Its surface is some 1,290 feet below sea level. The water is salty, carrying about 25 per cent of solids in solution as compared with 4 to 6 per cent of the ocean; the human body floats in it easily; it yields great quantities of salt, bitumen, and asphalt.

b) *The country east of the Jordan.* Rising abruptly from the valley of the Jordan, the hills to the east fade gently into the high plateau that stretches out to the deserts of Syria and Arabia. Three rivers drain this region; the Yarmuk and the Jabbok empty into the Jordan south of the Lake of Genesareth, and the Arnon into the Dead Sea. North to south the chief regions are Iturea, Gaulanitis with Trach-

nit, Batanea, and Auranitis to the east, Galaad, and Perea. The cities of the Decapolis were in Galaad and northeast of it. These highlands were fertile and well suited for pasturing cattle.

c) *The country west of the Jordan.* On this side the hills rise more gradually from the valley and are not as high as those on the east. Westward they drop off into low, sloping hills which are separated by deep valleys, and then to the maritime plain along the Mediterranean. In the north the mean altitude is about 1,800 feet, and in the south about 2,600. In Judea the mountains are more compact and barren than in Samaria and Galilee where they are broken up by frequent valleys and plains. This region is about 142 miles long with a width varying from 58 to 23 miles; from such peaks as Mt. Hebal in Samaria both the Mediterranean on the west and the Jordan valley on the east are easily seen. Between the hills of Galilee and those of Samaria the plain of Esdrelon extends all the way from the sea to the Jordan; it figures prominently in the history of the country as a battle ground and commercial route. The maritime plain is widest in the south, being about 12 miles wide at Jaffa and 8 at Cæsarea; it is broken at Mt. Carmel and at the Ladder of Tyre where the hills reach to the sea, but just beyond Mt. Carmel it opens out into the plain of Esdrelon. In general, this maritime plain is made up of a sandy stretch gradually rising through fertile soil up to the foothills of the central mountain range. South of Carmel it is called the Plain of Sharon, and the foothills beyond are the Sephelah.

d) *The southern region.* A mountain barrier, desolate for the most part and extending some 60 miles, forms the southern frontier of Palestine.

83. *The political situation at the time of Christ.* The geographical divisions sketched in the foregoing led naturally to political divisions along the same general lines. The region east of the Jordan was called Transjordan, its northern portion being further designated as Galaad and

its southern as Perea. West of the Jordan there were three sections, Galilee, Samaria, and Judea, while to the south was Idumea.

At the time of the birth of Jesus, Palestine was under the rule of King Herod the Great, an Idumean. Proclaimed King of the Jews by the Roman Senate in 39 B.C., he reigned till his death in 4 B.C. Though his administration of the external affairs of the nation merited him the title "Great," he was an abominable tyrant, hated by his subjects. He secured and maintained his power largely by the murder of real or fancied rivals, his victims often being the nearest members of his own family.

On the death of Herod the Romans distributed his territory among his sons as follows:

Archelaus (4 B.C.-A.D. 6) received Samaria, Judea, Idumea; Herod Antipas (4 B.C.-A.D. 39) received Galilee, Perea; Philip (4 B.C.-A.D. 34) received Northern Transjordan, embracing Iturea, Trachonitis, Batanea, Auranitis, and Gaulanitis.

Archelaus was deposed and banished by the Romans in A.D. 6 and his states incorporated into the Roman Province of Syria with procurators as governors; the most famous of these procurators was Pontius Pilate (A.D. 26-36).

Political unrest was the characteristic feature of the times in Palestine, and there were already indications of the beginnings of national revolt against Rome which was to culminate in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

84. ***The religious situation at the time of Christ.*** For some time before Christ the Jews were divided into two principal religious sects, the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

**A. The Pharisees.** The Pharisees (Aramaic, *perishin*, i.e., separated) stood for the strictest observance of the Law and of their own traditions as interpretations of the Law. These traditions contained countless rules, distinctions, and restrictions which, in reality, obscured the Law and made its observance impossible. Scrupulously exact in regard to

some precepts, notably the sacredness of the Sabbath, the Pharisees neglected the great precept of brotherly love, attached no importance to interior faults, and eluded certain obligations by subtle distinctions. Some of them were truly devout, but as a class they were proud and pretentious, disdainful of others, hard-hearted, avaricious, and hypocritical. Their external austerity and scrupulosity were largely for ostentation to heighten their reputation and secure marks of respect from the people.

**B. The Sadducees.** Rejecting the traditions of the Pharisees, the Sadducees (so called probably from Sadoc who secured the office of high priest in the time of Solomon, 3 Kings 2, 35) held only to the letter of the Law. They denied the immortality of the soul, the existence of spirits, the resurrection of the body, and the providence of God. They belonged chiefly to the priestly and wealthy classes, mingled freely with the pagans, imitated their practices, and sought an easy, worldly life. As a consequence they were extremely unpopular, while the Pharisees stood high in popular esteem as the true exponents of the national hopes.

**C. The scribes.** The Gospels frequently mention the scribes in connection with the Pharisees. They did not form a distinct sect; some were Sadducees, but most belonged to the Pharisees. Originally they were the copyists and guardians of the sacred texts; later on, their work embraced also official documents of all kinds and contracts, and they became the recognized teachers in the schools and synagogues. Hence, they were the real spiritual directors of the nation, but their interpretations of the Law were often arbitrary and fantastic.

**D. The priests.** The services in the Temple were conducted by the priests. They were the descendants of Aaron and were divided into twenty-four classes which took turns in serving in the Temple for a week at a time. Aaron, the first High Priest, was succeeded in that office by his elder son, Eleazar, and the High Priesthood continued in his

family till it was secured by Eli, a descendant of Ithamar, the younger son of Aaron, though perhaps there were at that time two High Priests. Under Solomon the office was restored to the family of Eleazar in the person of Sadoc (3 Kings 2, 27.35) and it remained in that family till Antiochus IV Epiphanes, king of Syria (175-164 B.C.), sold it to the highest bidder. Herod the Great and the Romans changed the High Priests, selecting them, however, from a few of the more influential priestly families.

**E. The synagogues.** The synagogues were erected for the religious meetings of the Jews; their origin goes back to the time of the Babylonian exile or shortly after the return from exile. They were to be found not merely in Palestine but also in the Jewish colonies abroad. They were usually built on an elevated site and followed the general plan of the Temple in having a hall and porticoes. In the middle of the synagogue there was a raised platform on which stood the reading desk. The Scriptures were kept in a chest which occupied the place of honor at one end of the hall and before which lights were lit during the services. Seats were provided for the congregation, those near the depository for the Scriptures being reserved for the more distinguished members; the women occupied a section separated by a screen from the section for men. Prayers, blessings, the reading of prescribed portions of the Scriptures taken from the Law and the prophets, and an address of instruction or exhortation made up the program of the meetings. Some of the synagogues were celebrated for their magnificence, especially the one at Alexandria with its seventy golden seats ornamented with precious stones. The eagerness of the Pharisees to secure the places of honor in the synagogues is mentioned in the Gospels (Matt. 23, 6, etc.).

**F. The religious festivals of the Jews.** The Gospels mention three festivals—the Pasch, the Tabernacles, and the Dedication.

The Pasch, called also the Feast of Azymes or unleavened bread, commemorated the liberation of the Jews from the bondage of Egypt. It occurred on the 14th day of the month Nisan and lasted till the 21st of Nisan; Nisan included the last part of our March and the beginning of April.

The Feast of the Tabernacles commemorated the forty years spent by the Jews in the desert and was also in thanksgiving for the completion of the harvest. It occurred 15-21 Tisri (September-October) and during it the people dwelt in tents or in booths made of branches and leaves.

The Feast of the Dedication commemorated the purification of the Temple after the idolatrous worship of the Syrians and its rededication in 163 B.C. under Judas Machabeus. It occurred 25 Kislev (November-December); called also Casleu in 1 Mach. 4, 59.

### 85. *The chronology of the life of Christ.*

A. **The year of our Lord's nativity.** Our Christian chronology was determined by Dionysius Exiguus (Denis the Little), a Roman monk who died about A.D. 540. According to his calculations Christ was born December 25 in the year 753 after the founding of Rome (*Ab Urbe Condita* or A.U.C.), and so the first year of the new era (A.D. 1) was 754 A.U.C. He drew this conclusion from the following data: Tiberius became Roman Emperor in 767 A.U.C., and he had reigned fifteen years when Jesus completed His twentieth year (Luke 3, 1.23);  $767 \text{ plus } 15 = 782$ ;  $782 \text{ minus } 29 = 753$ .

But according to Josephus, the Jewish historian, Herod the Great died in 750 A.U.C. about the time of the Pasch. At that time the Holy Family was in Egypt; hence, the date for the Nativity of our Lord cannot be later than 750 A.U.C. or 4 B.C. The question remains, "How much earlier can it be dated?" At the coming of the Magi our Lord was under two years of age (Matt. 2, 7.16); probably for the sake of security Herod exaggerated, but he would hardly have gone much beyond what he supposed to be the age of the Infant

he sought; so at the time of the Slaughter of the Innocents Jesus must have been at least a year old. Hence, He must have been born not later than 749 A.U.C. or 5 B.C. Perhaps His birth was before this date, for it cannot be determined how long a time intervened between the Slaughter of the Innocents and the death of Herod. However, the date of the Nativity cannot be placed earlier than 746 A.U.C. or 8 B.C., since a general census of the whole Roman Empire was being taken up at the time Jesus was born and this supposed a general state of peace such as did not exist before 746 A.U.C. Consequently, the date of the Nativity falls between 746 and 749 A.U.C.; i.e., between 8 and 5 B.C.

Early traditions stand for December 25 as the day of Nativity, although up to the year A.D. 376 the feast was celebrated on January 6 in the Eastern Churches.

**B. The date of the beginning of the public life of Christ.** When our Lord began His public life, He was about 30 years of age (Luke 3, 23). This might mean anything between 28 and 32; comparing these numbers with the probable dates for His birth (8-5 B.C.), we get A.D. 20-27 as possible dates for the beginning of His public life. However, the possibilities are narrowed down by the fact that John the Baptist began his preaching in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius; shortly afterwards, Jesus was baptized and began His ministry.

But this fifteenth year of Tiberius is open to various interpretations. Tiberius became the associate of the Emperor Augustus in A.D. 12, and succeeded him as emperor on the death of Augustus in August, A.D. 14. Which of these two dates (A.D. 12 or 14) is to be taken as the beginning of the reign of Tiberius? In speaking of Tiberius, ancient historical documents seem to number the years of his reign from A.D. 14; still St. Luke probably counted from the earlier date (A.D. 12), and this gives the year A.D. 26 as the date for the beginning of the public life;



since if A.D. 12 was the first year of Tiberius, the 15 must be added to 11 to get the total.

The date cannot be put before A.D. 26 because Pontius Pilate, who was then procurator of Judea (Luke 3, 1), held office from A.D. 26 to 36.

**C. The length of the public life of Christ.** St. John clearly notes the recurrence of the feast of the Pasch three times during the public life of our Lord, and a fourth Pasch seems entirely probable. The first Pasch was shortly after the miracle at Cana (2, 13), another about the time of the multiplication of the loaves (6, 4), and a third at the time of the passion; a fourth seems demanded by 5, 1, where the name of the feast is not given. Hence, the public life lasted three years and a few months.

**D. The date of the crucifixion.** Ancient tradition assigns A.D. 29 as the year when our Lord was crucified. A probable confirmation of this date is deduced from John 2, 20, "six and forty years was this temple in building"; this was said by the Jews at the first Pasch of the public life (John 2, 13, 23). Herod the Great began to build the Temple in the year 20 or 19 B.C.; added to 46, this gives A.D. 26 or 27. As the public life lasted three years, the crucifixion was in A.D. 29 or 30.

## Chapter XV

### THE PROLOGUE OF ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL (John 1, 1-18)

86. *Introduction.* No more fitting introduction to the Gospel story can be found than that contained in the opening verses of the Fourth Gospel. In considering our Lord we must always keep clearly in mind that He is both God and man; this truth, full of light and consolation for all, and yet mysterious beyond human comprehension, is expressed by St. John with such clearness and conciseness that Christians of all times have esteemed and cherished this prologue as a most satisfying and sublime declaration of our faith in the Incarnate Son of God. Its first fourteen verses form the "Last Gospel" usually read at the end of Mass. For convenience it may be divided into two parts, the Person of the Word and the Incarnation.

87. *The Person of the Word in Himself and in His relation to the Father*, vss. 1. 2. "In the beginning was the Word." This is a concise and energetic expression of the eternity of the Word. The phrase "in the beginning" alludes to the opening words of the Book of Genesis, where the work of creation is described; that marked the beginning of time, for then created beings began to exist. At that point the Word was; i.e., was already in existence; He did not then begin to exist, but He was existing already. The verb used (was, *erat*, ἦν) in itself signifies existence, while the imperfect tense indicates continued duration without determining either beginning or end. But, while there is this allusion to the creation of the world, the expression is put down simply and absolutely so that the sense is: In the

beginning, no matter how far back that beginning may be placed, before all beginning and without any beginning, the Word existed.

**The Word.** St. John alone calls the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity the Word (*Verbum, Logos*). Though the term *Logos* was current in Jewish philosophy from the time of Philo (20 B.C.—A.D. 54), St. John derived his doctrine of the Word, not from pagan or Jewish schools of philosophy as some have asserted, but from revelation alone. In the Old Testament the Word is often used of God's power or wisdom, and in many passages this is represented as a divine person (Ps. 32, 6; Prov. 8, 22; Wisd. 18, 15; Isa. 55, 11); still, before the revelation of Christ, the Jews took such expressions simply as poetic figures and vivid personifications, but here, as in many other instances, the Christian revelation brought out the full meaning of the term. There is a peculiar aptness in the term "Word" for the Son of God, for the Son is begotten of the Father by intellectual generation; in our mental processes ideas may be said to be generated by the intellect and then given external expression in words; in a somewhat similar way the Son is the external expression of the eternal Father knowing the divine essence, and so He is fittingly called the Word.

"And the Word was with God." This is an assertion of the Personality of the Word and hence of the distinction of Persons in God. The Word is with God as one person is with another, as the Son with the Father.

"And the Word was God." Here the true divinity of the Word is declared, together with the unity of the divine essence and the consubstantiality of Father and Son. The Word is God just as the Father is God; yet there are not two Gods, but one God in three divine Persons.

"The same was in the beginning with God." This is an emphatic repetition of the ideas in the first verse.

88. *The Word as creator of all things in the natural order*, vs. 3. "All things were made by Him, and

without Him was made nothing that was made." The Word is the creator of all things visible and invisible. Everything outside of God has been created, and they were all created through the Word. Of the Word the verb "was" (*erat*, ἦν) is used, denoting enduring existence; of creatures the verb "were made" (*factae sunt*, ἐγένετο) is used, denoting that they passed from nonexistence to existence. The second part of the verse is a repetition of the first by the Hebrew literary device called parallelism; here the parallelism is antithetical, the first part containing a positive statement, the second a negative, with special emphasis on the word "nothing" the Greek of which is "not even one thing." In Greek the first verb of this negative part is in the aorist (ἐγένετο), which marks a point of time in the past; the second verb is in the perfect (ὑέγονεν), which represents something past as continuing up to the present. Hence, the meaning is: At some definite time in the past were made all these things which have since continued to exist as things made.

**89. *The Word as creator of the supernatural order among men*, vss. 4-5.**

"In Him was life." St. John considers not the natural but the supernatural life of man, and this consists in the union of the soul with God in a manner above man's natural faculties. Knowledge and love constitute this life. God knows Himself perfectly and loves Himself with an infinite love. He communicates this knowledge and love to men, imperfectly on earth through faith, perfectly in heaven through the beatific vision. The Word was the eternal fountain of all grace and glory, and from that fountain true life was to be given to men.

"And the life was the light of men." Supernatural truth, revealed by the Word, enlightens the mind just as in the physical order light enables us to see; truth dissipates the darkness of sin, ignorance, and death. Man's natural light, his reason, is also derived from the Word, since He is the creator of all things.

"And the light shineth in darkness." In St. John darkness means the wicked who shun the truth. The present tense of the verb signifies continued action (shineth); even from the beginning of the world the Word was the life and light of men, making provision for the salvation of all, though this light shone out in its full splendor only at the Incarnation.

"And the darkness did not comprehend it." The Greek verb here used (*κατέλαβεν*) has two meanings: (1) to receive in a friendly way, to understand; and (2) to seize in a hostile spirit, to hinder. If the first meaning is taken, the sense is: "The light shone forth, but sinners closed their eyes so as not to see it"; if the second meaning is taken, the sense is: "The light shone forth without sinners being able to extinguish it." In itself the Greek verb favors the second meaning, but the first seems preferable from the context in verses 10 and 11 ("the world knew Him not"; "His own received Him not").

90. *The Incarnation*, vss. 6-18.

A. **General view of the Incarnation**, vss. 6-13. Verse 6. "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." The infinite distance separating John from the Word is seen in the very verb chosen to introduce John; it is "was," *ἐγένετο*, *factus est*, *fuit*, while for the Word it is "was," *ἦν*, *erat*. "Sent from God" is a definition of a prophet, one who comes from God and speaks in His name. In Hebrew John means "God has mercy" or "shows favor"; this was verified in John, since mercy was shown to his parents who received him in their old age, to John in the lofty mission intrusted to him, and to all men to whom he was to announce the coming of the Redeemer.

Verse 7. "This man came for a witness, to give testimony to the light, that all men might believe through him." The exposition proceeds in an orderly manner; first, it is stated that John came as a witness to give testimony; then, it is added that he was to give this testimony, not to himself,

but to the light; i.e., in order to declare that Christ is the light and the life without Whom the human race has no hope of salvation from the darkness of sin and death; finally, his mission is declared to be universal, for he was sent not to any particular group but to all Israel and, at least indirectly, to all men.

Verse 8. "He was not the light, but was to give testimony to the light." Christ stands superior to His precursor with an essential difference; John was in truth the lamp burning and shining (John 5, 35), but Christ alone is the light (*lux*, τὸ φῶς). The reason for this insistence upon John's essential inferiority to Christ seems to have been because, as we know from the Gospels, the Jews throughout Palestine admired John greatly and the Acts (18, 24-19, 1) show that his fame had spread into the Diaspora (i.e., among the Jews living in foreign lands).

Verse 9. "That was the true light." The Word is the true light because there is nothing in the moral and supernatural order without Him except the terrifying darkness of sin and error; He is light by His essence, and all other light is a mere participation in this divine light.

"Which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world." The action of the light is universal; it illuminates all men, gently offering itself to everyone. The last part of the verse may be kept as it is in English and Latin (man that cometh, *hominem venientem*) and it is then equivalent to "every man that is born"; but the Greek text has only a participle (ἐρχόμενον) which may refer, not to man, but to the light, and the sense then would be, "(which enlighteneth) every man at its coming into the world." This latter interpretation is suggested by John 3, 19: "The light is come into the world," and by John 12, 46, where our Lord says of Himself: "I am come, a light into the world"; it also seems to give a better connection between verses 8 and 9; John was sent to give testimony because the light was about to enter the world.

Verse 10. "He was in the world and the world was made by Him." He was present in the world from the very first day of creation since the world was made by Him. Through His creatures He had been manifesting Himself in such a way that men could and should have understood the existence of the Creator together with His eternal power and divinity (Rom. 1, 19, 20).

"And the world knew Him not." World here is not the universal creation, but men, for there is question of understanding. Through their own fault men refused to know the true God.

Verse 11. "He came unto His own." The Jews are again and again called in Scripture God's chosen people, His kingdom, His house. "Own" is here neuter in Greek and so may refer to the world into which Christ came at the Incarnation; in the next clause "own" is masculine in Greek.

"And His own received Him not." The history of the Jews is crowded with examples of their rebellion against God; they were always stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears and always resisting the Holy Ghost (Act. 7, 50-55); the Gospels tell how completely they repudiated Jesus.

Verse 12. "But as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name." Verses 10 and 11 have described the rejection of the Word by sinners; verses 12 and 13 describe the happiness of those who receive Him. "As many as" includes all men, no matter what their nationality, and hence, even though before they had not been "His own," i.e., Jews. These men received Him with faith and love, and to them He gave the power to become the sons of God; Christ alone is the natural Son of God, but all believers are truly God's children by adoption. Grace makes us partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1, 4), so that we can elicit acts of the supernatural order and thus lead a supernatural life, a life in this sense divine. Even on earth we are like our Heavenly

Father; in heaven nothing will be lacking in our likeness to Him, for then we shall enjoy the unutterable glory and happiness of seeing Him as He is. This lofty dignity does not belong to our human nature in itself; it is conferred by the Word on all who believe in His name. Name here stands for the person; we must, then, believe that Jesus Christ is the only-begotten Son of God (cf. vss. 17 and 18). Faith is the necessary condition; it is God's gift offered to all men.

Verse 13. "Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Natural physical birth can contribute nothing toward attaining such a high, supernatural dignity (cf. John 3, 1, "unless a man be born again"); this is emphasized by enumerating the three things conceived as concurring for human generation: blood out of which the body is formed; the will or instinct of the flesh which moves with blind appetite; and the will of man which being rational and free can act for a morally good purpose. The sons of God, then, are those born of God (by faith), not those who are born of the seed of Abraham nor of illustrious or pious parents. This divine sonship then can come only from God. Yet through the goodness of God nothing is easier for men since no natural condition of birth or station is demanded; good will, helped by divine grace, is enough; faith alone is required, and this grace the Word holds out to all men.

**B. The mystery of the Incarnation, vss. 14-18.**

Verse 14. "And the Word was made flesh." This is the center, the pivotal point of the whole prologue of St. John. The Eternal Word, a divine person distinct from the Father, remaining with Him in the unity of the same essence, the Creator of all things, the vivifier and illuminator of souls, this Word is made flesh, becomes man by assuming human nature. In Scripture flesh means the whole man, body and soul; here the human compound is referred to under the name of its inferior part to place beyond all possi-



bility of doubt the truth of the assumption of human nature. Moreover, this brings out in more striking relief the sublime love of the Son of God Who, despite His divine majesty, took upon Himself the form of a slave (Phil. 2, 7). Human pride and selfishness must surely be melted into humility and divine love in the presence of this manifestation of the Light.

"And dwelt among us." The God-man really tarried among men; the mystery is so profound that it needs to be confirmed by this repetition. The Greek verb *ἐσκήνωσεν* means "he pitched his tent" among us; it contains an allusion to the Tabernacle of the Old Testament as God's earthly dwelling place; at the Incarnation God truly took up His habitation with us, and the ancient types and prophecies find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

"And we saw His glory, the glory, as it were of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." St. John speaks in the name of all the Apostles; they beheld His glory with the clearness and admiration with which one might behold a gorgeous spectacle in the theater. In St. John the glory of the Word is His divinity; this divinity cannot be seen directly, but it shines forth resplendently through the marvelous signs of wisdom, power, and sanctity in the words and deeds of Jesus. "As it were" does not imply qualification or restriction, but it has the force of "exactly like" and hence asserts that such glory appeared in Him as was to be expected in a divine person. He is the Only-begotten of the Father because His sonship alone is natural, while ours is communicated to us by adoption. Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son, is full of grace, since He possesses in their fullness all the spiritual gifts which He communicates in measure to men. He is, moreover, full of truth: (1) because He is the Eternal Wisdom, the Teacher and Master announcing and giving testimony to all truth; (2) because, as the long-promised Messiah, He is the reality foreshadowed by the figures and prophecies of the Old

Testament; (3) He is the Supreme Good (*Summum Bonum*), containing in Himself in an eminent degree all particular goods. In this brief summary St. John wishes to show how copious and precious are the fruits of the Incarnation; all that is worth while in human life has come to us through it; "without Me, you can do nothing" (John 15, 5).

The supreme excellence of the Incarnation has now been declared; in Jesus Christ are the glory of the divinity and the fullness of grace and truth. This excellence is next confirmed by the testimony of John the Baptist (15), and then by the superiority of the gifts brought by Christ over those given through Moses (16.17); finally, there is an explanation of the reason why grace and truth are conferred upon men by Christ alone (18).

Verse 15. "John beareth witness of Him and crieth out, saying: This was He of Whom I spoke: He that shall come after me, is preferred before me: because He was before me." John testifies that he is inferior to Jesus. It was only after John had prepared the way that Jesus began His public preaching, but He surpasses John immeasurably in the dignity of His mission, for His is the real work of salvation, while John's function is merely to act as His precursor or herald. There is, however, an internal reason why Christ should so outstrip John in the dignity of His office, for "He was before me." The Word existed from eternity, and the sense is: Christ fulfills a much loftier mission than John the Baptist because such dignity of mission was becoming to the infinite dignity of the Person to Whom it was intrusted, since that Person is eternal and is truly God.

Verse 16. "And of His fullness we have all received: and grace for grace." The connection between these two verses is better expressed, as in the Greek, by "because" rather than by "and." St. John here confirms this high dignity of the mission and of the Person by citing the wondrous and copious gifts poured out upon the world by Christ from

His own fullness. From His fullness of grace and truth (cf. vs. 14) we have all received; it is something universal, open alike to Jew and Gentile. "And grace for grace," we have all received grace after grace, one grace following another without intermission as a reward for the fidelity of the soul's correspondence with the previous grace.

Verse 17. "For the law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The precious value of these gifts is now developed by a comparison with the best that had been given to men in the past. The New Law is far more excellent than the Old. For the Old brought the anger of God and death since it was merely a law, commanding and forbidding, but not in itself bestowing the strength to fulfill; the New is the grace of God, that is, mercy and an abundance of heavenly gifts. The Old Law was full of figures and shadows; the New is truth, that is, the full revelation concerning God and things divine. The Old was given through Moses, as through a servant; the New is made (ἐγένετο) through Jesus Christ, Himself the author and creator of all supernatural gifts.

Verse 18. "No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." This verse gives the reason why grace and truth are through Christ alone. For He is in the bosom of the Father (in Greek, ὁ ὢν, who was, has been, and is); hence, though no man has ever seen God, Christ the only-begotten Son has seen Him and knows and loves Him perfectly. Finally, what He has seen in this perfect knowledge, that He has made known and has explained to men. Hence, the revelation of God, given by Jesus Christ, is complete, hitherto unknown, and sublime. This revelation is set forth in the Gospel which consequently must share in the lofty dignity of the revelation it presents.

## Chapter XVI

### THE INFANCY AND BOYHOOD OF CHRIST

(Matt. 1.2; Luke 1.2)

91. *St. Matthew and St. Luke* each devote the first two chapters of their Gospels to the early years of our Lord's life; the other two Evangelists omit this part and begin with the preaching of John the Baptist. St. Matthew's account shows traces of having been received indirectly from St. Joseph, and St. Luke's, from the Blessed Virgin.

After outlining the genealogy of Christ, St. Matthew tells of St. Joseph's perplexity on learning that his virgin spouse is with child, then of the coming of the Magi, the flight into Egypt, the slaughter of the Innocents, and the return to Nazareth after Herod's death; the conception and birth of Jesus are merely mentioned ("when as His mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child, of the Holy Ghost," 1, 18; "And he knew her not till she brought forth her first-born son; and he called His name Jesus," 1, 25; "When Jesus, therefore, was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of King Herod, behold there came Wise Men from the East to Jerusalem," 2, 1). St. Luke gives detailed accounts of the earliest events, the two annunciations, the visitation, the circumcision of John, and the birth, circumcision, and presentation of Jesus; he omits the Wise Men and the flight into Egypt, and supplies the episode of the finding in the Temple. For the 18 years following the finding in the Temple we have only the brief notice that Jesus dwelt at Nazareth with His parents, was subject to them, and advanced in age and wisdom and grace with God and men.

In the sequence of these events a difficulty arises from the omissions in St. Luke and from his seeming to place the return to Nazareth immediately after the presentation in the Temple. There are two probable solutions: (1) St. Luke simply ignores the events between the presentation and the return from Egypt; consequently Luke 2, 39 is to be taken as referring to the return to Nazareth after the sojourn in Egypt; this is not improbable, but it demands a rather free construction of 2, 39, where St. Luke seems to connect the return to Nazareth immediately with the preceding presentation. (2) After the presentation the Holy Family returned to Nazareth, but only for a short stay; they then went back to Bethlehem and it was then that the Magi came.

Summary of the events:

1. Birth of John the Baptist foretold, Luke 1, 5-25;
2. Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin, Luke 1, 26-38;
3. Visitation of the Blessed Virgin to Elizabeth, Luke 1, 39-56;
4. Birth and circumcision of John the Baptist, Luke 1, 57-80;
5. St. Joseph's perplexity, Matt. 1, 18-24;
6. Nativity of Jesus, Matt. 1, 25; 2, 1; Luke 2, 1-20;
7. Circumcision and presentation of Jesus, Luke 2, 21-38;
8. Magi, Flight into Egypt, Slaughter of the Innocents, Matt. 2, 1-18;
9. Return to Nazareth, Matt. 2, 19-23; Luke 2, 39;
10. Finding in the Temple, Luke 2, 40-52.
92. *The genealogies of our Lord.* Matt. 1, 1-17; Luke 3, 23-38. In listing our Lord's ancestors, St. Matthew begins with Abraham and ends with St. Joseph, while St. Luke begins with St. Joseph and carries the list back to Adam. The two lists agree in the fourteen names from Abraham to David; after David, St. Matthew gives twenty-six names up to Joseph included, but St. Luke gives forty-two, and the only names found in both lists are Salathiel,

Zorobabel, and Joseph. St. Matthew divides his list into three sections with fourteen names in each, but a name seems to have been lost at the end of the second section (vs. 11). The number fourteen may have been chosen because of its Messianic character, since the Hebrew consonants in the name David have the numerical value of fourteen (D 4, V 6, D 4). In such systems for genealogical tables names would readily be omitted, while in the official lists of the Synagogue such omissions were sometimes made when the persons were considered unworthy of remembrance. There are evident omissions in St. Matthew's list; e.g., between Joram and Ozias three names are left out — Ozachias, Joas, and Amasias (vs. 8; cf. 4 Kings 8, 24). The verb "to beget" had a technical sense in such lists, meaning merely "to be an ancestor of" and not necessarily "to be the father of."

Three solutions have been offered to explain the differences between the lists of St. Matthew and St. Luke.

1. Both lists give the ancestors of St. Joseph, but at times the legal descent is substituted for the natural in accordance with the *lex leviratus* of Deut. 25, 5: "When brethren dwell together, and one of them dieth without children, the wife of the deceased shall not marry to another; but his brother shall take her, and raise up seed for his brother." Jacob was the father of St. Joseph; Heli was the half-brother of Jacob, having the same mother but a different father; Heli died without issue and then his widow married his brother Jacob, and consequently St. Joseph, born of this union, was the real son of Jacob but the legal son of Heli. The same explanation is given for Salathiel, Neri being his real father and Jechonias his legal father. This solution was advocated by Julius Africanus in the third century and was commonly followed down to the fifteenth century; while not without its difficulties, it remains very probable.

2. St. Matthew gives the genealogy of St. Joseph, St. Luke that of the Blessed Virgin. The chief objection to this solution is that the Jews were not accustomed to include women

in such lists; it is met by supposing that St. Joseph had been adopted into the family of the Blessed Virgin or by noting the special reasons for departing from custom in this case. Mere legal descent from David through St. Joseph would hardly seem to satisfy the Scriptural insistence on our Lord's being his son, and so St. Luke might well have sought out the real line of descent through His mother; then, too, the unique position held by the Mother of God might have induced St. Luke to record her ancestors. His opening sentence, then (3, 23), means either "the son, as it was supposed of Joseph, who was (the son-in-law) of Heli" or "the son, as it was supposed, of Joseph (but in reality the descendant, i.e., the grandson), of Heli." In this way St. Luke might have sought to give the line through the Blessed Virgin without violating the custom of omitting the name of the mother.

3. Both give the genealogy of St. Joseph, but St. Matthew selects those persons who directly carried on the royal line of David, while St. Luke gives the real or the legal (according to the *lex leviratus*) parents. This theory has recently met with favor and is not improbable, as far as can be discovered; St. Matthew does, in fact, mention only those who were kings or eldest sons.

93. *The birth of John the Baptist foretold*, Luke 1, 5-25. St. Luke begins his Gospel with a short introduction (1, 1-4) written in the periodical style of the classical historians. Many had already published Gospels; it is uncertain whether this includes St. Matthew and St. Mark; it is not impossible, for the expression "have taken in hand" does not necessarily imply that all these attempts were either unsuccessful or reprehensible. The sources upon which St. Luke has drawn for his material are eyewitnesses and preachers of the Gospel. He does not say whether he received his information from them by word of mouth or through their writings, but he does assert that he has investigated everything from the beginning with great diligence. He

intends to present the results in orderly form; hence, in general, he will follow the chronological sequence of the events. He addresses his work to his friend Theophilus, about whom history is silent, and aims at giving him a clear understanding of the truth of those things which he had already been taught by oral instruction (κατηχέω, "I instruct orally"; from this is derived "catechumen").

In true historical style St. Luke marks the time when the event to be narrated took place; it was in the days of Herod, the King of Judea. This was sufficient indication for the readers of his day. They well knew that the reign of Herod (39-4 B.C.) was a period of external splendor but of misery and degradation for the people. The Roman influence was strong; the King was an Idumean, not a Jew, was noted for his cruelty even toward his near relatives, and favored pagan customs, which were an abomination in the eyes of his subjects. Religiously the nation was at a low ebb through the influence of the Pharisees with their neglect of essentials and their exaggeration of the accidental.

There were some, however, who still preserved the true religious spirit and among them were the priest Zachary and his wife Elizabeth. The great sorrow of their life was that God had not blessed their union with children. The Jews had a peculiar dread of being childless, not because, as is sometimes supposed, they all hoped that the Messiah would come from their family (for it was common knowledge that He was to be of the family of David), but because they hoped that their children would see the Messiah and so they themselves would live in their children to see Him. Hence, the *lex leviratus* obliged the brother of a man who died childless to marry the widow so that the name of the dead man might not be lost among the people, for the first-born son of the new union was considered the child of the one who had died.

There were twenty-four classes of priests, each class or "course" officiating in the Temple for a week, from the



Sabbath evening to the morning of the following Sabbath. In this way each class served twice a year. There were many different ministries to be performed and, to preserve order and decorum, these were distributed by lot among the class whose turn it was to take charge of the services. The most honorable of these ministries was the offering of incense at the morning and evening services; owing to the large number of priests, those who had once performed this ceremony were excluded from the lots for it, and so each priest usually enjoyed the honor only once.

At a given signal, the faithful in the courts for the men and for the women prostrated themselves, the priests and Levites took their assigned places, and the officiating priest with two assistants entered the Holy Place. The altar of incense, used only for this offering, stood at the west end of the Holy Place, just before the veil shutting off the Holy of Holies; nearer the entrance of the Holy Place and to the right of the altar as one faced it was the table of proposition, while opposite this table stood the seven-branched candlestick. One of the assistants cleansed the altar by removing the ashes from the previous incensing; then having bowed down in worship he reverently withdrew, walking backward. The other assistant laid on the altar live coals taken from the altar of holocausts and then retired like the other. When these preparations were completed, another signal was given and the priest with the golden censer advanced and spread a fixed amount of the incense on the glowing coals. The cloud of incense symbolized the prayers of the nation ascending to God (Ps. 140, 2), and solemnity marked the whole ceremony (cf. Apoc. 8, 3-4).

Just as Zachary had offered the incense, an angel appeared standing in the Holy Place at the right of the altar of incense. After dispelling Zachary's natural fear at this celestial visitation, the angel informed him that his prayer had been heard and that he was to have a son. Because of the advanced age of both himself and his wife, Zachary had

long since given up hope of children. Still he had formerly prayed for this blessing and perhaps it is this half-forgotten prayer that the angel said was now about to be answered; or, as the official representative of the people before God, Zachary had, while offering the incense, prayed for the coming of the Messias, and this prayer was now answered, for he was to have a son who would be the herald of the approaching Messias.

The angel foretold the greatness of this son and of his work. He was to bring joy to many, to be great before the Lord, to lead a life of abstinence from strong drink, and to be sanctified from his mother's womb. His work in general would be to convert many to God; in particular he was to go before God, as the precursor of the Messias, in the spirit of Elias (who, according to the Prophet Malachy, was to be sent before the great day of judgment) to prepare the people for the coming Redeemer, to make them such that the ancient Patriarchs may regard them kindly, and to bring unbelievers to the wisdom of the just.

But Zachary, reflecting on the natural unlikelihood of his having a son, doubted the word of the angelic messenger and demanded a sign. The angel reproved his lack of faith, saying that he is Gabriel, one of the archangels before the eternal throne, and that he had been sent to bring this news; hence his word should have been enough. Still, to satisfy Zachary, a sign will be given, but it will be one that will serve at the same time to punish his incredulity; he will be dumb till the fulfillment of the prophecy.

Meanwhile the people were becoming uneasy at Zachary's tarrying in the Holy Place; it was customary for the priest to come out quickly to bless the people. When he finally appeared and was unable to pronounce the words of the blessing, they understood that he had seen a vision. At the end of his week of service in the Temple, he returned to his home which tradition places at Ain Karim about four miles west of Jerusalem. For five months his wife Elizabeth

remained in solitude meditating on the great things God had revealed to her and rejoicing at the removal of the sterility which had been her reproach among the people.

Zachary in Hebrew means "Jahwe has remembered"; Elizabeth means "God has sworn."

94. *The annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, Luke 1, 26-38. The Gospel of St. Luke has been called the most beautiful book in the world, and here we have it at its best; for combined beauty, sublimity, and simplicity this passage is unsurpassed in all literature. The persons concerned are all of the highest dignity: God Himself, Who sends a message to mankind; the messenger, the Archangel Gabriel, who is one of the bright spirits standing before the heavenly throne; the Blessed Virgin Mary, to whom the message is sent, the fairest, purest, and holiest of God's creatures, Queen of angels and of saints. The burden of that message is that God is now beginning to work out directly His mysterious plan for the redemption of the human race; His only-begotten Son is about to clothe Himself in human form, to be made flesh from the pure Virgin who is to be His mother. Such a narrative calls less for extended explanation than for careful reading and meditation with an "understanding heart."

*The text.* In verse 28 the words "blessed art thou among women" are doubted by many. They are found in most manuscripts, but are lacking in Aleph, B, L (Parisian), Coptic, one Syrian, Armenian, and Eusebius. They are doubted chiefly because they seem to have been transferred from verse 42 where Elizabeth addresses them to Mary.

In the sixth month after the conception of John the Baptist, the Angel Gabriel is sent to Nazareth, a little village nestling in a small valley of the Galilean hills just before they slope down to the plain of Esdrelon. The Virgin Mary is dwelling there with her parents; she is espoused to Joseph and according to custom lives with her parents till the marriage day when the groom will come in gay proces-

sion to lead the bride to his own house. Both Mary and Joseph are of the house of David. For Joseph this is clear from Luke 2, 4: "Because he was of the house and family of David"; for Mary it is equally clear from Luke 1, 32, and Rom. 1, 3, where our Lord is spoken of as the Son of David, for this relationship cannot be the merely legal one He would have had through Joseph. Hence, in Luke 1, 27, while "of the house of David" may refer to either Joseph or Mary, the reference is probably to Mary alone.

Entering the house where, as we may suppose, the Blessed Virgin is engaged in prayer for the coming of the Messias, the angel salutes her with the declaration that she is full of grace. Though she increased continually in grace all her life, Mary now possesses that fullness of grace which befits the future Mother of God, and that grace has been given her as a preparation for this sublime dignity. From this fullness of grace in the Blessed Virgin is deduced her Immaculate Conception, for such freedom from original sin was befitting the Mother of God. "The Lord is with thee" implies some special work together with divine help for its performance.

Mary is troubled at this strange salutation, for her humility makes her tremble at this high praise, and perhaps she already suspects that God is about to demand something extraordinary of her. Quieting her fears, the angel assures her that she has found grace with God; she is pleasing in God's sight and now a singular blessing is granted to her. These words may also imply the divine motherhood, since in the Old Testament the expression, when referring to a woman, often means that she is to receive a son from God. Then the angel tells her that she shall conceive and bring forth a son. His words must have recalled to her mind the prophecy of Isaias of which they are an almost verbatim repetition: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and shall bear a Son and His name shall be called Emmanuel" (Isa. 7, 14). The child was to be called Jesus (i.e., "Jahwe is salvation");

the meaning of the name is given in Matt. 1, 21, "for He will save His people from their sins." Salvation from sin was not numbered by the Pharisees among the prerogatives of the Messiah; rather according to them the Messiah would come when the people, through the perfect external observance of the Law, had freed themselves from sin, and so they would then receive the glory of the Messianic kingdom as a reward for their own sinlessness.

The dignity of Jesus is in general that He shall be great and shall be called (and therefore shall be, since it is God Who authorizes it) the Son of the Most High. In particular His dignity has three features: He will be the Son of David; He will restore the kingdom of David; and His kingdom will last forever. Current opinion held that this would be a material, political kingdom, but that kingdom of Israel was already a thing of the past. In its entirety it had been maintained only during the reign of David's son, Solomon; then it had been divided and after many vicissitudes had fallen under the conquerors. It was partly restored under the Machabees only to issue in the rule of the Idumean Herod, the vassal of Rome. In the prophecies the kingdom of David stands for the Messianic kingdom, the spiritual kingdom of Christ Who says: "My kingdom is not of this world." In this new "house of Jacob" all Christians are the children.

In contrast with Zachary, Mary at once believes the words of the angel; but she seeks to discover what course of action she is to follow to carry out the divine will. She had made a vow of perpetual chastity and knew that this vow was acceptable to God, for otherwise her words would be meaningless since she had only to consummate her marriage with Joseph in order to fulfill the angel's words about her conceiving. Even the rationalists have been forced to concede that this is the meaning of her words, but, following their usual method when confronted by an unwelcome text, they try to deny that the words are authentic. Here their subterfuge is hopeless, for the external evidence (i.e., the manuscripts)

is unanimous, while the internal evidence (i.e., the context) is very strong since this question and the angel's answer give unity, harmony, and a natural progression to the narrative.

Objection is sometimes taken to this on the ground that Mary might have known from the prophecy of Isaias that the mother of the Messiah was to retain her virginity; but, in the words of St. Ambrose, she had indeed read the fact, but she had not read how it was to be brought about, for this had not been revealed even to the prophet himself.

Mary was espoused to Joseph to secure her a tranquil, protected life and to save her from suspicion.

In answer to Mary's question the angel explains how God will accomplish His purpose. The conception will be miraculous, through the direct intervention of God. God will manifest His nearness, as in the desert the cloud, showing His presence, rested on the Ark of the Covenant, and will exercise special creative force in her, as in the beginning the Spirit hovered over the waters (Gen. 1, 2); but all this will be here made known only in its causing the virginal conception. Every exterior work of God is performed by the whole Trinity, but different works are "attributed" to the different Persons; so here the supernatural conception is attributed to the Holy Ghost. The words "and therefore [He] shall be called the Son of God" do not give the real reason why Christ is the Son of God, for, if they did, He would be the Son of the Holy Ghost or rather of the whole Trinity. Hence, they give only the reason why we can recognize Him as the Son of God (the *causa cognitionis*), i.e., from the supernatural manner of His conception we can conclude that He is the Son of God.

Again in contrast with Zachary, Mary does not ask for a sign; yet a sign is given her. God has but recently manifested His power and providence by removing the sterility of her cousin Elizabeth; the knowledge of this manifestation prepares the mind to accept the reasonableness of this

further intervention of the divine omnipotence. It is not known what degree of relationship existed between Mary and Elizabeth; the Greek and Latin words used (*συγγενής* and *cognata*) mean merely a relative. Perhaps Elizabeth was the sister of Mary's mother and therefore the Blessed Virgin's aunt.

Mary professes her readiness for all that God wills; she is His handmaid, His servant. She believes all the angel has told her; she not only submits to the divine designs, but she also desires their accomplishment. It is with perfect humility that she accepts the wonderful dignity conferred upon her, and at her words the Second Person of the Holy Trinity takes human form in her chaste womb and the Word is made flesh. The angel awaits her answer and then departs.

95. *The visitation*, Luke 1, 39-56. The expression "in those days" does not necessarily mean that the Blessed Virgin began her journey immediately after the departure of the angel; they rather imply, and we may well suppose, that she spent some days meditating on the great mystery just revealed and giving thanks to God. But when she set out for the home of Elizabeth in the hill country of Judea, she hastened and reached her destination without delay.

On hearing her words of greeting, Elizabeth feels the infant in her womb leap for joy, and she herself is filled with the Holy Ghost. According to the general opinion of theologians, John the Baptist was then sanctified, and his mother speaks under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost Who reveals to her that Mary is the Mother of God. She calls Mary "blessed among women," i.e., blessed above all women, since the Hebrew language lacks the degrees of comparison. She is blessed because she is the mother of the Lord and because the things which she had accepted in faith will be fulfilled (or verse 45 may be rendered, "blessed art thou because thou hast believed that these things shall be accomplished").

Mary's reply is the beautiful *Magnificat*. With supreme

joy she thanks God for the great blessing of the Redemption now begun, and praises the divine attributes which shine forth resplendently in this mystery. These attributes are: (1) mercy, 48-50; (2) power or providence, 51-53; (3) fidelity, 54-55. The canticle may be paraphrased as follows:

In joy of heart I praise God with all the powers of my soul. For by choosing me, lowly as I am, to be the Mother of His Son, He has bestowed on me the greatest graces and blessings. He has given all this not to me only but to all men, since through the ages all will call me blessed on account of the salvation brought to the whole world. I praise the power of God Who has done this, and His holiness, and His mercy which He shows to all who reverence and serve Him with filial fear. He rejects the powerful and rich who, refusing to reverence Him, place all their glory in temporal things. But He exalts the just and fills them with spiritual blessings. And now He has begun to fulfill His marvelous promises to Abraham and to his posterity. He has already brought help to His chosen people by giving them the long-expected Savior, and in this way He shows that He is truly faithful to His promises.

The whole canticle is replete with the spirit of both the Old and the New Testaments in faith, reverence, and joyful gratitude, and so may be said to close fittingly the Old and open the New (cf. the Canticle of Anna, 1 Kings 2, 1 ff.).

After staying with Elizabeth for about three months, Mary returned to Nazareth. It cannot be determined whether she was present at the time of the birth of John the Baptist; "about three months" is too indefinite to be decisive. Neither is the uncertainty removed by the sequence of events in the narrative, for St. Luke at times closes his account of one event before beginning another which occurred at the same time as the first or partly overlapped it; e.g., 1, 65,66 compared with 1, 67 ff.; and 1, 80 compared with 2, 1; 3, 19,20.

96. *The birth and circumcision of John the Baptist*, Luke 1, 57-80. As the angel had foretold, Eliz-



abeth brought forth a son, and his birth was a source of rejoicing to her kinsfolk and neighbors. In compliance with the law the infant was circumcised on the eighth day, and on the same day the child was to be given a name. The relatives who were present wished to call him Zachary after his father; "called" in verse 59 is in the imperfect in Greek and Latin and has the force of "tried to call" or "wished to call." They were astonished when Elizabeth insisted on the name John, but when they appealed to Zachary by signs (perhaps, then, he had been struck deaf as well as dumb, though this does not follow necessarily), he wrote "John is his name." Zachary at once recovered his speech and praised God. The *Benedictus*, which begins at verse 68, probably contains this praise of God mentioned in verse 64; in that case the fear of the people and the spread of the news throughout Judea would follow verse 79.

**A. The Benedictus.** This canticle has two parts: the first (vss. 68-75) concerns the Messiah and the fulfillment of God's promises; the second (vss. 76-79) describes the office of the Precursor. It may be thus paraphrased:

a) The Lord God of Israel is worthy of praise, for He has bestowed great blessings upon His people in beginning now the work of the Redemption. He has given us a powerful Savior in the house of David, as He long ago promised through the prophets, and this Savior will deliver us from all our enemies. In this way God brings to pass the great work of mercy promised in the covenant made with Abraham on oath, when He swore that He would give us all the means necessary to serve Him in security, in holiness, and in justice. (It is noteworthy that Zachary here dwells upon the spiritual character of the Messianic kingdom.)

b) And thou, child, shalt be the prophet of God, because thou shalt perform the task of preparing the people for the approaching Messiah. This thou shalt do by leading them to recognize the Savior in Whom they will find remission of their sins. This remission is through the great mercy of God,

for it is through that mercy that the Orient from on high [the Sun of Justice, the Light of the World, the Messiah] has visited us. He has come to enlighten those [the Gentiles] who sit in darkness [of ignorance] and in the shadow of death [sin], and to direct our [the Jews'] feet in the way of peace.

"The Orient from on high." The prophets often refer to Christ under the figure of light or the sun. "For behold I will bring My Son, the Orient," Zach. 3, 8. "But unto you that fear My name the Sun of Justice shall arise," Mal. 4, 2. "The people that walk in darkness have seen a great light, to them that dwell in the region of the shadow of death, light is risen," Isa. 9, 2 (cf. Isa. 60, 1-3).

"In the way of peace." In the prophets the Messiah is represented as bringing peace; e.g., "His name shall be called . . . the Prince of Peace. His empire shall be multiplied, and there shall be no end of peace" (Isa. 9, 6.7). Among the Jews peace (*shalom*) stood for prosperity in its fullest sense, a happy and tranquil state free from every fear and disturbance; in the prophets it is the sum total of all the Messianic blessings, reconciliation with God, and supreme happiness.

**97. *The perplexity of St. Joseph*, Matt. 1, 18-25.** After the return of the Blessed Virgin to Nazareth, Joseph became aware that she was with child. Not being able to reconcile this with her well-known holiness, Joseph was in doubt about what he should do. In his love for Mary and his confidence in her virtue he was fully resolved not to expose her to public shame through a divorce secured in court; still, as separation seemed imperative, he reluctantly thought of giving her a letter of divorce privately as the law permitted. But his doubts were settled by an angel who appeared to him in sleep and instructed him in the divine origin of Mary's conception. St. Matthew is careful, according to his custom, to point out that the virginal conception and birth had been foretold by the Prophet Isaias (7, 14).

In the passage cited the Prophet speaks of a startling miracle to be performed by God, for a virgin (i.e., one certain virgin chosen by God, since in Hebrew and Greek the definite article is used with the noun, in Hebrew *ha'alma*, in Greek ἡ παρθένος) will conceive and bring forth a son; as she is to do this as a virgin, her virginity must remain intact at least till the child is born.

Having received this assurance, Joseph took unto him his wife, i.e., according to custom he went through the marriage ceremony and conducted her from her house to his own. They lived together in perpetual virginity. The words "he knew her not till she brought forth her first-born son" have been twisted by heretics to mean that they kept their virginity only till the birth of Jesus; but such an interpretation is excluded by the way the word "till" is used in Scripture, for it merely indicates what was done or not done up to a certain time and says nothing about the time that follows. E.g., in Gen. 8, 7, "which (the raven) went forth and did not return, till the waters were dried up on the earth"; this does not mean that the raven returned later; 2 Kings 6, 23, "Michol the daughter of Saul had no child to (till) the day of her death," and certainly she had none after her death. Nor does the term "first-born" imply that the Blessed Virgin had other children, for it is used technically because of the special rights belonging to the first-born son. (On the "brethren" of Jesus see § 115.)

98. *The nativity of Jesus*, Matt. 1, 25; 2, 1; Luke 2, 1-20. St. Luke alone gives us a detailed description of Christ's birth. Here, as also at the beginning of the first and third chapters, he reveals his historical genius; for while the bulk of these first two chapters shows the influence of its Semitic sources, being drawn from early documents or heard, directly or indirectly, from the actors in the events, his own style puts its mark upon the little introductions to each of the first three chapters.

St. Luke begins by giving the historical setting. It is in the

time of Cæsar Augustus; a census of the whole Roman Empire has been decreed. In Syria, the province on the northern frontier of Palestine, the census was made by Cyrinus, the governor. The Jews in Palestine, following their ancient custom, repaired to the respective homes of their ancestors for the enrollment. Joseph, therefore, went to Bethlehem because that was the city of David, and Joseph was of David's family.

Nearly all these historical points have been called into question; yet after years of discussion even adverse critics for the most part have been forced to admit that the situation could have been as outlined by St. Luke. The chief difficulty lies in the lack of documentary proof outside of the Gospel; but for those who recognize St. Luke as a genuine historian his testimony suffices, while, of course, the inspired character of his writing removes all possibility of his being in error.

**A. The census under Augustus.** There is abundant evidence to show that Augustus was zealous and systematic in gathering information about the resources of his vast domain. An inscription at Ancyra records that he three times made a census of all Roman citizens. At his death he left a *breviarium imperii* which included a general enumeration of the public resources, of the number of citizens and allies under arms, of the fleets, and of the revenues from taxes in the provinces and tribute from subject kingdoms (Tacitus, *Ann.* 1, 11); this implies that reports on such matters had been officially compiled throughout the Roman Empire. A census was taken up in Palestine in A.D. 6 (Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* 17, 13, 15; cf. Acts 5, 37) and about the same time in Syria according to an inscription at Beirut which says that Q. Aemilius Secundus, prefect of a cohort in Syria, took the census of the town of Apamee by order of Quirinius.

Papyri found in Egypt testify that a census was taken up there every fourteen years; this policy can be traced back

as far as the census of A.D. 20. On this basis earlier occurrences would have been A.D. 6 and 8 B.C. This sequence is confirmed by the census of A.D. 6 just mentioned. In Palestine the census in 8 B.C. might easily have been postponed a year or two because of local difficulties.

These facts fully justify the conclusion that the census of St. Luke is in harmony with the known policy of Augustus in taking a census at fixed intervals. The silence of Josephus regarding this census may be due to its nature, since it was under Herod and caused no public disturbance while the next census (A.D. 6) followed the deposition of Archelaus, marked the subjection of the Jews to Rome, and had in view the imposition of Roman taxes. Josephus may, in fact, be alluding to this census when he speaks of the refusal of the Pharisees to take the oath of allegiance to Herod and Rome (*Ant. Jud.* 17, 2, 4).

**B. Cyrinus, governor of Syria.** In the lists of governors of the province of Syria for this period Quirinius (Cyrinus) is found beginning his term of office in A.D. 6. This date is evidently too late for the census in Luke 2, 2. But an inscription found at Tivoli near Rome and generally accepted as referring to Quirinius speaks of him as governing Syria twice (*iterum Syriam obtinuit*). This earlier term is placed shortly after the death of Herod and so began in 3 B.C. His predecessors as governor were Saturninus (9-6 B.C.) and Varus (6-4 B.C.). From these dates it is argued that the census was begun under either Saturninus or Varus but was completed only after Quirinius was in office. It seems improbable, however, that the census could have been prolonged in this fashion; still, the improbability is lessened by recalling that it was Herod, not the Romans, who directly carried out the census in Palestine and that he might have had reasons for delaying it.

A more probable explanation is drawn from the vagueness of the Greek word translated "governor." The participle used by St. Luke (*ἡγεμονεύων*) may mean the governor of a

province, or a procurator like Pontius Pilate (Luke 3, 1) who ruled a part of a province in subordination to the governor, or even a supreme military commander. That Quirinius was in the East in the years 10-7 B.C. and that he was invested with great authority is proved by two inscriptions found at Antioch in Pisidia and by Tacitus (*Ann.* 3, 48) who records that after his consulship in 12 B.C. Quirinius conducted with success a military expedition against the Homonadenses in Cilicia, then a part of the province of Syria. While exercising such authority, Quirinius would naturally have been intrusted with the supervision of the census; even if he were not, his name could have been connected with the census because his military rule was in reality the most prominent feature of that year. Strictly interpreted, St. Luke introduces Quirinius simply to mark the time of the census without asserting that Quirinius had any other connection with it.

**C. The census in Palestine.** At this time Herod was King, and consequently he was independent of Rome; but his independence was only nominal. He had received everything from Rome and was always subservient to the emperor. Hence, he would readily accept a command for a census of his people. As the Romans usually tried to respect local customs, it is easy to understand why the enrolling was done in the Jewish manner, i.e., by having each one go to his ancestral city.

**D. The Nativity.** The scene is laid in the little village of Bethlehem about five miles south of Jerusalem. This made the journey from Nazareth about seventy miles. The town was crowded on account of the census, and Joseph was compelled to seek shelter in a cave on the outskirts (there are many such caves in the vicinity and some were used as stables). The Gospel is silent about the presence of animals at the manger; the tradition about the ox and the ass goes back to the fourth century. Bethlehem means "house of bread" and the Fathers note its fitness for the birth of

Him Who says of Himself: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven." The Emperor Constantine erected a church on the traditional spot of the Nativity and it was restored by Justinian in 531.

**E. The Shepherds.** The first adorers called by God to join Mary and Joseph in worshiping the newborn Savior were some shepherds who had been guarding their flocks in a neighboring field. In this region the weather is usually mild enough for pasturing the flocks in the open between the rains of November and those of January, the mean temperature for December being about 48 degrees F., though the difference between night and day is often as much as 20 degrees F. The message of the angels announces the birth of the expected Savior, calls Him Christ the Lord, an indication of His divinity (cf. Acts 2, 36), refers to Bethlehem as the city of David to recall the prophecies foretelling that the Messiah would be a descendant of David and be born in Bethlehem, tells the shepherds how they can recognize the Infant, and closes with the words: "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will." There is now glory to God in heaven, for no higher or more perfect glory can be given Him than that which is now rendered by Jesus Whose every act has infinite value on account of the infinite dignity of the Divine Person Who has assumed this human nature. There is glory to God also because there is now offered to Him superabundant satisfaction for the sins of men. On earth there is now peace, i.e., (see § 96) the sum of all the Messianic blessings, reconciliation with God, happiness, and the hope of eternal joy. "Of good will" does not refer to man's attitude to God, but to God's toward men. Men are no longer the object of God's wrath, but the children of grace whom God loves. There is a striking balance between the two parts of this sentence: glory, peace; in heaven, on earth; to God, to men of good will.

Hastening to Bethlehem, the shepherds found the Infant

just as the angel had described Him. They then understood more fully the message they had heard, or (perhaps better) they spoke openly of what they had heard about the Child. This second meaning links up better with the following verse (18) where there is noted the astonishment of those who heard the shepherds' story. To whom did they speak of this? Perhaps even to the people in the village of Bethlehem, spreading the good news far and wide; at least to Mary and Joseph and the others who were in the cave. These persons were filled with wonder at their words and (from the following contrast with the Blessed Virgin) spoke to each other about it all, but Mary treasured up all these things in her heart and quietly meditated upon them.

99. *The circumcision and presentation of Jesus*, Luke 2, 21-38. According to the law, the Infant, having been circumcised and named on the eighth day, was brought to the Temple on the fortieth day and there He was ransomed, while His Mother went through the ceremony of purification for the legal defilement incurred in childbearing. The earliest prescription of the law required the first-born sons to be consecrated to the service of God. Later the Levites were substituted for them, but each first-born son had to be brought to the Temple and the price of his ransom paid. The ransom was five shekels, i.e., about \$3.25. So the Holy Family presented themselves at the entrance leading from the Court of the Women to that of the Israelites, and there the Blessed Virgin was blessed by the priest, then they offered two turtle doves, the offering of the poor (those who could afford it had to offer a lamb and a turtle dove).

A. **Simeon.** It had been revealed to this holy old man that he would not die before he had seen the Messias; doubtless he was instructed at the same time in the spiritual nature of the Messianic salvation. Taking the Infant in his arms, he praised God in a short but expressive canticle, the *Nunc Dimittis*, giving thanks (*a*) for his own



joy in seeing the Savior, in consequence of which he can now die in the glad consciousness of having beheld the object of the national longing (29.30) and (b) for the salvation brought to all men, for it is a universal redemption, dispelling the religious darkness that kept the Gentiles groping far from God, and bringing special glory to Israel as the chosen people from whom the glad tidings are to spread to all the world (31.32). The Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph wondered at his words, for, despite their knowledge that Jesus was the Son of God and the Messias, they were not acquainted with all the details of His future work.

Simeon then describes the contrasting lots of those who receive and those who reject Him, ruin for the one and salvation for the other. For Christ is set up as a sign, as something so conspicuous that it cannot escape notice. Hence He will be contradicted; He will oppose men's evil desires and there will be no course except either submission to Him or opposition. The touchstone for all men is, as it has been ever since His coming, "what think ye of Christ?" In this way the secrets of men's hearts will be revealed, the good submitting to Christ, the evil persecuting Him and His followers. Because of her closeness to Him, His Blessed Mother must have a proportionate share in this contradiction, and so Simeon predicts that sorrow will pierce her heart like a sword.

**B. Anna**, remarkable during the long years of her widowhood for her generous devotion to God in fasting, prayer, and constant attendance at the Temple services, joined her voice to Simeon's in praising God and afterwards spoke of the Divine Infant to all who were waiting for the coming of the Savior.

100. **The Magi**, Matt. 2, 1-12. After the purification, the Holy Family dwelt in Bethlehem, though perhaps they first returned to Nazareth for a short visit (§ 91). Meanwhile Wise Men came to Jerusalem from the East seeking the newborn King of the Jews. There is no good reason for

supposing they were kings; in the Orient the study of the natural sciences, especially astrology, was in high repute, and those learned in this lore were called Magi. Their country cannot be determined; among the ancient writers they are called Persians, Chaldeans, Arabs, Babylonians, or Ethiopians. Probably they were three in number, as suggested by the threefold gift; they are sometimes depicted on ancient monuments as two, four, or six. The names assigned to them, Gaspar, Balthasar, and Melchior, are of doubtful origin. Uncertainty attaches also to the time of their coming, since it may have been only a few days or even a year after the purification. The star which they beheld could have had none but a miraculous origin, for no natural star could have served to point out a particular house. The dispersal of the Jews had excited general expectation of a coming Savior of mankind, and as students of astronomy, the Wise Men would connect this marvelous celestial appearance with the birth of the expected King, while grace would instruct them further in its meaning.

Their search startled all Jerusalem and made Herod tremble at this unexpected danger threatening his throne. He questioned the learned men among the Jews and they had no difficulty in replying, for it was known that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. Micheas (5, 2) had foretold this glory of Bethlehem; in their reply the scribes turn the words of the Prophet so as to emphasize the greatness of Bethlehem ("thou . . . art not the least among the princes of Juda") where Micheas had referred to the small number of its inhabitants ("thou . . . art a little one among the thousands of Juda"); St. Matthew, therefore, gives their version without affirming that it is exact.

Having already determined to do away with this new rival, Herod takes pains to learn from the Wise Men the time of the appearance of the star. Then he sends them to Bethlehem with orders to let him know where the Child is, pretending that he, too, wishes to adore Him. Their

guiding star had disappeared on their approach to Jerusalem; it now once more shines brightly before them and leads them to the house where Joseph in the meantime had provided a home for the Child and His Mother.

On entering the house, the Magi first adore the Divine Infant and then offer Him the characteristic gifts of the Orient, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Perhaps there were three Wise Men and each presented one of these gifts; more probably each offered all three gifts. The traditional meaning attached to these gifts is that the gold was offered to Christ as King, the incense as God, and the myrrh as man. Then, having been warned by God in their sleep, they avoided Jerusalem on their return to their native land.

101. *The flight into Egypt*, Matt. 2, 13-15. Joseph, too, was warned against the machinations of Herod. An angel appeared to him in sleep and ordered him to seek refuge in Egypt till the danger was past. With his usual prompt obedience, Joseph departed at once with the Child and His Mother for Egypt, the ancient asylum of the Jews, where at that time there were many prosperous Jewish settlements. It is not known for certain where the Holy Family lived during their exile in Egypt, but tradition points to Matarieh near Heliopolis, a suburb of Cairo. This prepared the way for the fulfillment of the prophecy of Osee (11, 1): "I called my son out of Egypt." Literally the words concern the liberation of the Jews from their captivity in Egypt, but typically they concern the Messias.

102. *The slaughter of the Innocents*, Matt. 2, 16-18. Herod's plans were disarranged by the failure of the Wise Men to return to him. In his anger the King ordered the murder of all the boys of two years and under in Bethlehem and its vicinity. From the information received from the Magi, Herod was sure the Child could not be over two years of age; probably for security he made the age limit rather high, and so at this time Jesus may have been only a few months old. As Bethlehem then had only about 2,000

inhabitants, the number of babies slain could hardly have exceeded 30 or 40.

When the Jews had been forced to assemble at Rama, a village some six miles north of Jerusalem, to be led into exile, Jeremias had described the grief of the nation under the image of Rachel mourning for her children. This national grief was a type of the weeping of the mothers of Bethlehem over their murdered infants, and it was aptly represented by the sorrow of Rachel whose tomb is on the road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem.

103. *The return to Nazareth*, Matt. 2, 19-23. It is not known how long Herod lived after having had the holy innocents put to death. He was succeeded in Judea by his son Archelaus who seems to have inherited all his father's vices. An angel brought the news of the tyrant's death to Joseph with the command to return to Palestine. The character of Archelaus made a return to Bethlehem dangerous, and so Joseph was told in sleep to go to Galilee, in the region ruled by Herod Antipas, another of Herod's sons. St. Matthew notes that our Lord's dwelling in Nazareth had been foretold: "He shall be called a Nazarene." It is difficult to locate this prophecy; probably the reference is to Isa. 11, 1, where the prophet speaks of the Messiah as a flower out of the root of Jesse, the Hebrew word for flower being *neser*.

104. *Our Lord's life at Nazareth*, Luke 2, 40-52. This period extends from the return from Egypt, when our Lord was perhaps two or three years old, to the beginning of His public ministry at about the age of thirty (Luke 3, 23). St. Luke gives two general descriptions of His life during these years (2, 40-51-52) and one detailed episode (2, 41-50). Jesus grew in stature and bodily strength like other children; in action and in word He manifested wisdom; though His divine and infused knowledge was perfect from the beginning, His experimental knowledge increased; and finally the divine favor was His. God was the constant

witness of His acts of virtue, and His nobility of character won for Him the esteem of His fellow men.

**A. The finding in the Temple.** The Law prescribed that the Jews should adore in the Temple on the three great feasts of the year, the Pasch, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. This was probably understood as binding only on those living in Palestine, but devotion urged even those in distant lands to make the journey at least occasionally. No doubt Mary and Joseph did this as often as possible, and when Jesus was twelve years old (at the age of thirteen a Jewish boy was considered as coming under the full obligation of the Law) He accompanied them to Jerusalem for the Pasch. Probably He had gone with them before, for in the text the twelfth year is connected not directly with the journey but with our Lord's remaining in the city after the departure of His parents.

On such pilgrimages the Jews usually traveled in large companies for protection, and so it was easy for His parents to fail to notice the absence of Jesus till the caravan had halted at the end of the first day of their return. They went back to Jerusalem the next morning and sought Him in vain, but on the morning of the third day they found Him in the Temple. During the festal seasons the doctors of the law were accustomed to hold large gatherings in the Temple, not, of course, in the Holy Place, but in the Court of the Gentiles or in some of the halls or porticoes that surrounded the Temple proper.

In a group of teachers and students, Jesus was seated on the ground or on a low bench, taking an active part in the discussions and astonishing all by His keenness of intellect in putting and answering questions. The topics discussed probably concerned the Messiah and His work. There was no vain display of knowledge on the part of our Lord such as is proposed in the Arabian "Gospel of the Infancy" where He explains all the books of the prophets and then ranges widely over astronomy and other sciences. But this mani-

festation of His glory and supernatural knowledge was intended to awaken the interest of His hearers and to prepare their minds for His future public teaching by removing some of their erroneous ideas about the Messias.

His parents, too, wondered, not at the wisdom He displayed, for they knew well His divine nature, but at His manifesting His dignity in this open fashion. The words of Mary contain no reprehension, but express affection, sorrow, and her inability to understand His conduct. So, too, in the reply of Jesus there is affection together with consolation and instruction; there had been no need of worry, for all this was according to the Will of His Heavenly Father. In these first recorded words of Jesus He declares that He is the proper Son of God and announces the great guiding principle of His life, to do the Will of His Father.

There was much in this reply beyond the understanding of His parents. They were aware that God was His Father and that He had come for the salvation of the world. But they did not know the manner in which He was to carry out that work nor how this separation from them and this discussion with the doctors pertained to it. Above all, they did not understand the necessity of suffering, a necessity that reached Jesus Himself and all who love Him. Had the discussion in the Temple been His sole object, He could easily have told His parents of His intention; but they, too, had to be trained in the school of the Cross. These hidden truths gradually revealed themselves to His Blessed Mother, for she treasured up all His words in her heart.

Then Jesus returned to His life of obscure obedience at Nazareth, and the next eighteen years are veiled in silence except for the general description given above. It was a life of retirement, of prayer, of work amid the quiet, uneventful surroundings of home to serve as an example of what is the ordinary lot of men.

## Chapter XVII

### THE PUBLIC LIFE OF CHRIST

#### I. Period of Preparation

105. *Duration.* The public life lasted from shortly before the Pasch of A.D. 26 till the Pasch of A.D. 29, i.e., for three years and a few months. While not certain, these dates provide a practical working basis.

106. *Harmony of the four Gospels.* The difficulty of arranging all the events given in the four Gospels according to the order of their occurrence has been felt from the beginning. Attempts to present them in this order have resulted in the "Harmonies of the Gospels." These vary greatly, but the general outlines are clear and the points of difference usually are on details of minor importance. We follow what seems to be the most probable arrangement, but without claiming for it more than probability. St. John fixes the larger divisions; St. Mark and St. Luke give the general sequence of the details, while St. Matthew fills in with the same or additional details.

107. *The four divisions.* For the sake of clearness, the public life has been divided into four periods; they are presented here in summary for reference, and then each period is treated in detail.

#### I. Period of preparation, February to April, A.D. 26.

Sources: John 1, 19-2, 12.

Mark 1, 1-13.

Luke 3, 1-4, 13.

Matt. 3, 1-4, 11.

#### II. Period of the proclamation of the Kingdom, April, A.D. 26 to April, A.D. 27.

*Sources:* John 2, 13-4, 54.

Mark 1, 14-2, 22.

Luke 4, 14-15; 4, 31-5, 39.

Matt. 4, 12-25; 8, 1-4; 8, 14-17; 9, 1-17.

### III. **Period of the spread and organization of the Kingdom**, April, A.D. 27 to March, A.D. 28.

*Sources:* John 5, 1-6, 21.

Mark 2, 23-6, 52.

Luke, 4, 16-30; 6, 1-9, 17.

Matt. cc. 5-7; 8, 5-13; 8, 23-34; 9, 18-11, 19;  
12, 1-14, 33.

### IV. **Period of conflict**, March, A.D. 28 to April, A.D. 29.

*Sources:* John 6, 22-12, 11.

Mark 6, 53-10, 52; 14, 3-9.

Luke 9, 18-19, 28.

Matt. 8, 18-22; 11, 20-30; 12, 38-45; 14, 34-20,  
34; 26, 6-13.

*N.B.* Before taking up the matter here provided for the study of each period, the student should read carefully the text listed under the sources for that period.

#### 108. **Period of preparation**, February to April, A.D. 26.

A. *Sources:* John 1, 19-2, 12.

Mark 1, 1-13.

Luke 3, 1-4, 13.

Matt. 3, 1-4, 11.

B. *Events:*

	John	Mark	Luke	Matt.
Preaching of John . . . . .		1, 2-8	3, 1-18	3, 1-12
Baptism of Jesus . . . . .	1, 32-34	1, 9-11	3, 21, 22	3, 13-17
Temptations of Jesus . . . . .		1, 12, 13	4, 1-13	4, 1-11
Testimony of John . . . . .	1, 19-34			
The first disciples . . . . .	1, 35-51			
The miracle at Cana . . . . .	2, 1-11			
Jesus at Capharnaum . . . . .	2, 12			

**C. Summary.** John the Baptist preaches penance in the desert of Judea and along the banks of the Jordan. Jesus is



baptized, retires to the desert for forty days to pray and fast, and is tempted. Returning to the Jordan, he receives the testimony of John the Baptist and gathers His first disciples, Andrew, John, Peter, James the Greater, Philip, and Nathanael (Bartholomew). He goes to Galilee, changes the water into wine at Cana, and stays a short time in Capharnaum.

109. *The preaching of John the Baptist*, Mark 1, 2-8; Luke 3, 1-18; Matt. 3, 1-12. St. Luke begins this section by supplying the historical background. The civil rulers are first enumerated: Pontius Pilate ruling Judea in the name of the Roman Emperor Tiberius; Herod Antipas holding Galilee; his brother Philip, Iturea, and Trachonitis (the regions north and east of Galilee); and Lysanias, Abilena (the region still farther north). Then are mentioned the religious leaders of the Jews, Annas and Caiphas; Annas had been high priest from A.D. 6 to 15; his son-in-law, Caiphas, held the office from A.D. 18 to 36, but Annas continued to exert great influence.

"The word of the Lord was made unto John" (Luke 3, 2); this was a customary way among the prophets of expressing their divine commission to preach (cf. Jer. 1, 2; Ezech. 1, 3). All the Synoptics introduce the prophecy of Isaias as applying to John's mission. St. Mark prefaces it with a verse from Malachy: "Behold I send My angel before Thy face who shall prepare Thy way before Thee," but he cites it as though it came from Isaias. He does this because Isaias is the more famous prophet and the part from Isaias appeared to him to be more important.

The prophet foresees the Jews returning to Palestine from their exile in Babylon; as they cross the Syrian desert Jahwe is their leader and a herald goes before Him to remove the natural obstacles offered by the desert. In this figurative manner Isaias exhorts the people to prepare their hearts for this divine intervention in their behalf; but he has in mind not merely this temporal liberation from captivity but also

the spiritual redemption to be brought later by the Messiah; hence, even in its literal sense the prophecy refers to the preparation for the coming of Christ.

Since John the Baptist came to preach penance (Luke 3, 3), the preparation foretold must refer to men's souls. Sins are to be removed and penance performed; "do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3, 2). The general sense suffices here; everything must be corrected that can serve as an obstacle to the grace of the Redeemer. Still we may substitute moral for the physical evils enumerated in the prophecy: the valleys are sins of omission, laziness, faint-heartedness; the mountains and hills are sins of commission, especially through pride; crooked ways are the evil inclinations of the heart or bad habits; the rough ways are daily defects or whatever sullies the conscience. The promised reward is that all men shall see the salvation of God. Hence, this work is of universal character; St. Luke alone refers to this feature.

John is now about thirty years old; tradition, with a foundation in Scripture (1 Par. 23, 3), fixed thirty as the earliest age for the exercise of the office of priest, teacher, or prophet. John had been living a life of austerity in the desert, subsisting on locusts and wild honey, a diet still resorted to in necessity by the poor of that region. His garb was equally austere, a rough garment of camel's hair bound round the body by a girdle of leather. For four centuries, i.e., since the time of Malachy, no prophet had appeared in Israel, and the people were expecting the coming of the great Deliverer. No wonder, then, that they flocked to hear John's divine message; from all sides they came, from Jerusalem, from all Judea, and from the region about the Jordan (Matt. 3, 45).

John preached to them the baptism of penance for the remission of sins, and many were baptized confessing their sins. Various forms of washing the body to get rid of legal impurities were familiar to the Jews. John added the element

of interior purification as opposed to the merely external. The act of baptism was to excite and manifest the interior disposition (sorrow for sin and the purpose of amendment) from which alone came the remission, for this rite was not a sacrament, but rather like our sacramentals. The people confessed their sins; this was a necessary accompaniment of this baptism. The confession probably did not stop at the simple declaration that they were sinners, but included the explicit manifestation of at least their more serious offenses. This, of course, was not sacramental confession, but was intended, like the baptism, to elicit and heighten the disposition needed to obtain pardon from God.

**A. The Pharisees and Sadducees.** Among those who came to hear John were many of the Pharisees and Sadducees. John addresses them severely, and even harshly: "Who hath showed you?" This may be merely an expression of astonishment that they should have come at all, but it is better to take it as a condemnation of the motives behind their coming. No one had shown them how to flee from the wrath to come, for they had not the correct idea of penance, since, while retaining their interior pride and hypocrisy, they wished to perform only the exterior act. If they wished really to escape the divine wrath, they must change their manner of life, they must manifest by deeds their renunciation of sin.

Then with vigorous words John strikes directly at the heart of their pretensions. As children of Abraham, they thought salvation was for them as a right; but no, it is for those and those only who follow Abraham in his living faith. It is not, therefore, reserved for the Jews, since if need be, i.e., if the Jews prove unworthy, God could raise true children of the faithful Abraham from the very stones that strewed the river bank; how much easier, then, will it be for Him to draw such faithful servants from among the Gentiles. Here, then, is the way to salvation, nor is there any other, for now the ax is laid to the root of the tree. The

old pretensions totter to their fall; the new standard is not exterior alliance with the chosen people, but a life of virtue flowing from a heart submissive to God. The Messiah comes as a judge for the fall and resurrection of many (Luke 2, 4) and now is the time of mercy for the repentant, but of stern justice for the rebellious. In the image, trees may represent either nations or individuals. Once more it is Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God, or Christ, the stumblingblock; the kingdom of God is the new state in which man is reconciled to God and raised to supernatural heights through the Word Incarnate; it is the reign of God through the Messiah, all men being united with Christ in complete and loving submission to God. This happy state begins on earth interiorly in each soul, exteriorly in the Church, and it is consummated in heaven; it is heavenly in its origin, its laws, its blessings, and its final goal.

For the effect of John's words see Matt. 21, 25, 26, and Luke 7, 29, 30, where our Lord comments on the enthusiastic reception given John by the people in contrast with the aloofness of the Pharisees, who despised the counsel of God and rejected John's baptism.

This encounter of John with the Pharisees forms a very vivid scene; the intrepid preacher is surrounded by the humble, repentant crowd when a group of Pharisees advance haughtily through the multitude with flowing robes and pious looks while the people fall back in deference to these superior personages. But with burning words John tears the mask of hypocrisy from their brows, and then off they slink in anger and disgrace, trying to hide themselves in the crowd.

Here at the very beginning we see the stage set for the great drama that is to close on Calvary. The lines are clearly drawn. The common people accept God's plan for the salvation of the world, but the leaders as a class reject it. This is to be a severe struggle with effects reaching down all the ages and off into eternity.

**B. John and the people.** In preaching to the people John does not hold up as necessary a life of extreme self-denial like his own. What is required in preparation for the Messiah is no vague, visionary perfection, but the proper performance of the ordinary duties of life; for men in general, brotherly love; for publicans and soldiers, justice to all without fraud or violence. These specimens of John's teaching are sufficient to indicate how he adapted himself to the needs of the various classes of society.

Such was the impression made on the people that they were inclined to think that he himself might be Christ, the Messiah. John vigorously corrects this notion. He is only the herald, sent before to prepare the way. One mightier than he is to follow and John is not worthy to be even His servant. He will baptize with the Holy Ghost, reaching into men's souls just as fire penetrates dry wood, while John could reach directly only the surface. He will separate the good from the evil, as in harvest time the wheat is separated from the chaff, when the grain, previously trodden out by yoked oxen, was thrown into the air with a broad shovel (fan) and the wind carried the light chaff off to some distance, while the heavier grain fell to the ground near the worker.

**C. Characteristics of John's preaching.** Everything is direct, clear, and full of color and life. The illustrations are mostly drawn from the desert, e.g., the vipers, the pebbles scattered along the river bank, and the gnarled tree trunks fit only to be cut down and burned; others are taken from daily life, e.g., the gathering of the harvest and the servant loosening and carrying his master's sandals.

110. *The baptism of Jesus*, John 1, 32-34; Mark 1, 9-11; Luke 3, 21, 22; Matt. 3, 13-17. In the providence of God Jesus is here manifested publicly as the Messiah by the testimony of John the Baptist, by a heavenly apparition, and by a voice from heaven.

**A. Circumstances.** The time cannot be determined

accurately, but from the context and especially from the words of St. Luke, "when all the people were being baptized" or "had been baptized" (in Greek the construction is the article with the aorist infinitive), it is clear that many had already received John's baptism, and hence popular expectation of the coming Messiah had been excited. The place was along the Jordan, probably at the ford nearly east of Jericho. The chosen people of old had entered the Promised Land by crossing the Jordan in this vicinity, and it was, therefore, fitting that here the entrance to the kingdom of God should be thrown open.

**B. The baptism.** Jesus comes from Galilee to be baptized; He has left the quiet of His home at Nazareth to begin His public ministry. Many reasons may be assigned for His receiving baptism from John; (1) this baptism had been determined by God, not by the Law, for the people as a preparation for the coming kingdom, and Jesus wishes to be like His brethren in all things except sin; (2) He desires to give an example of humility; (3) He wills to take on the character of a sinner, though sinless Himself, just as later He will die on the Cross as a sinner; (4) He in this way gives His sanction to the mission of John in the eyes of the people; (5) He is to be manifested as the Messiah through John and the supernatural signs.

John tried with vehemence to prevent Jesus from submitting to this humiliation. He shows clearly that he recognizes Jesus as the Messiah; he had already professed his inferiority to the Messiah and he now manifests it in this protest to Jesus. Besides, John knew of no baptism except his own and the one to be administered by the Messiah; hence, in saying that he should rather be baptized by our Lord he acknowledges that Jesus is the Messiah.

A slight difficulty arises from John 1, 32-34 where the Baptist seems to say that he recognized Jesus only through the heavenly signs. In fact, he did not know Jesus by sight, and these signs had been promised him so that he might

recognize Him. But at the coming of Jesus, he received an internal revelation that sufficed for himself. The external signs then confirmed this revelation and enabled him especially to make his public testimony more convincing. For, if he had had only this private revelation, he might have said, "I knew He was the Messias because God had revealed it to me"; but now he is able to say, "God gave me a sign by which to recognize the Messias, and at the baptism of Jesus I saw that sign."

To John's protest Jesus opposes the Will of God. In this way it is becoming for us to fulfill all justice, i.e., justice in its widest sense of all that God wishes to be in man and his actions so that he may preserve his proper relations to God. It is the Will of God that Jesus should receive this baptism.

**C. The signs.** Three signs are here given: (1) The heavens were opened, i.e., in a particular part of the sky there appeared an unusual brightness. (2) The Holy Ghost came down upon Jesus in the form of a dove, the symbol of peace or grace or sanctity. (3) The voice of the Father was heard saying, "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." Throughout the Septuagint the Hebrew *yahid* "only" or "only begotten" is regularly translated by ἀγαπητός "beloved." The Father is well pleased with Him, for though the divine goodness shines forth in all God's works and so they all give Him pleasure, it appears in its plenitude in the Son as in the Father. Since Christ here takes on the character of a sinner, we are told that through Him and in Him the Father wishes to reconcile the world to Himself and that no one can be pleasing to Him unless he conform himself to Christ.

Jesus was always full of grace and consequently He received no increase of grace by this coming of the Holy Ghost, nor was He then chosen or anointed as the Messias, but all this was for His public manifestation. The signs, then, were not to enlighten Jesus, but to point Him out to

the people. John at least perceived them (John 1, 32-34), and perhaps the crowd also.

III. *The temptations of Christ*, Mark 1, 12-13; Luke 4, 1-13; Matt. 4, 1-11. After His baptism our Lord is led, not forced, but under the influence of grace, by the Holy Spirit into the desert. There He spends forty days in solitude, prayer, and fasting, and is tempted by the devil.

A. **Circumstances.** Tradition locates this event on the Mount of the Temptations, a steep hill rising abruptly from the plain of the Jordan west of Jericho. This is a wild, hilly region, cut by deep ravines; later many hermits lived there in imitation of our Savior, and even today there is a large monastery nestling in the rugged hillsides. Forty nights are mentioned together with the forty days to emphasize the fact that, while a fast with the Jews ended at sundown, Jesus kept His fast unbroken throughout the entire period. It seems that He was tempted only at the close; still many hold that the temptations were more or less continuous during the forty days. It is clearly stated that He felt hungry only at the end; consequently the natural effects were unnoticed before, owing to the intensity of His prayer in which He commended the work of His ministry, now about to begin, to the Father and interceded for mankind.

B. **The temptations.** St. Matthew and St. Luke describe three temptations, but give them in different orders; we shall follow St. Matthew. The temptations cover the usual field where men experience the attacks of evil and which is described by St. John as "the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2, 16). So there is: (1) gluttony (sensuality), (2) pride (ambition, vainglory), and (3) avarice (the lure of riches). In each temptation the devil has a twofold aim: (1) to learn whether Jesus is the Son of God, and (2) to induce Him to act contrary to God's will. Our Lord defeats this plan utterly, revealing nothing concerning His person and acting according to God's manifest will.



a) *The first temptation.* The twofold aim of the tempter is obvious here: (1) If He is the Son of God, He may avoid the temptation by saying so. (2) The suggestion is that, now when He is hungry, God is delaying too long to provide for Him; therefore let Him provide for Himself independently of God.

Jesus dismisses the suggestion by asserting that God has many ways of providing for His children and He does so in His own time.

b) *The second temptation.* Having failed to shake Christ's trust in God, the tempter tries to lead Him into presumption by appealing to vainglory. He places Him upon one of the towers on the high wall surrounding the Temple; here is a glorious way to reveal Himself to the people; let Him cast Himself down and it will be as though He had descended from heaven.

(1) If He is not the Son of God, He may disclaim the title and the special protection promised to the Messiah. (2) If He acts as suggested, He will be taking matters into His own hands and not following the course mapped out by God.

Jesus again brushes aside the suggestion. God is not to be tempted; He promises His help to all men, but not when they needlessly expose themselves to danger or merely try to test the divine power or goodness.

c) *The third temptation.* It is useless to try to locate the mountain to which the devil next carries our Lord; there is no mountain from which the whole world can be surveyed. The tempter simply placed Christ on an eminence and then in some exterior fashion caused a vision of worldly pomp and splendor to pass before His eyes.

(1) If He is the Son of God, He may say that He Himself is worthy of adoration; if He is merely a man He may be attracted by this promised glory. (2) The prophets had announced that the Messiah would possess all the earth; Ps. 2, 8, "I will give Thee the Gentiles for Thy inheritance and

the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession" (cf. Ps. 71, 8-11; Isa. 49, 6 ff.), but the way to this led through labor and suffering (Isa. 50, 4-8; 53, 2-12). Here is a chance to possess all this immediately and without effort.

Jesus repels the suggestion with the declaration that God alone is to be adored. After the temptations angels minister to Him.

112. *The testimony of John the Baptist*, John 1, 19-40. While Jesus was in the desert, John continued his work of preaching and baptizing. No doubt he spoke often of the events at the baptism of Jesus, but we have no record of this till the day before Jesus returned to the Jordan. The Evangelist selects three distinct testimonies given by the Baptist (1) before the delegates of the Sanhedrin, (2) before the people, and (3) before John's disciples.

**A. Before the delegates of the Sanhedrin**, John 1, 19-28. Civil and religious matters came under the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin, the supreme council of the Jews, composed of seventy-one members drawn from the priests, the scribes, and the heads of the different tribes or families. They could not long ignore the new religious movement caused by John's preaching; so they now send a delegation to make an official inquiry into his character and work. To their questions John replies that he is not Christ nor Elias, who was expected as the precursor of the Messiah (cf. Mal. 4, 5), nor the prophet, i.e., the one promised through Moses (Deut. 18, 15.16) nor some other prophet like Jeremias (cf. Matt. 16, 14; Mark 6, 15); but he is the precursor of the Messiah foretold by Isaias.

This should have made his character and mission clear to them, but they had not come in a spirit of honest investigation. They were "Jews" (vs. 19), the term repeatedly used in the Fourth Gospel for the party hostile to our Lord, and Pharisees (vs. 24) who, as a class, had already been severely condemned by John and had remained incredulous and envious of his popularity. So they refuse to understand and

they persist in their inquiry by asking why he baptizes. John tells them plainly that the Messiah is at hand and that it is He Who gives him authority to baptize in preparation for His coming.

**B. Before the people,** John 1, 29-34. The next day John is able to point out Jesus to the people, for our Lord appears at the river, coming to receive this public testimony. The Baptist calls Him the Lamb of God (*a*) in accordance with the prophecy of Isaias (53, 7), "He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer"; (*b*) because the lamb figured prominently in the sacrifices, especially at the Pasch, and Christ is the true victim supplying the insufficiency of the others and really taking away sin; (*c*) because of His innocence and purity (cf. 1 Pet. 1, 19, "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled"). John then adds explicitly that He takes away the sin of the world, i.e., every kind of sin in all men.

He refers also to his previous declaration that Jesus would soon follow him and to the divine sanction that had been given at the baptism of Jesus. Now he points to Jesus and says expressly that this is the Messiah, the Son of God.

**C. Before his disciples,** John 1, 35-40. Again on the following day John with two of his disciples stood on the river bank, probably expecting to see Jesus pass once more. On our Lord's appearing, John looks at Him intently and with joy. Our Lord does not approach him, but passes near by to give him another chance to testify and in this way with the help of grace to induce his disciples to follow Him. On hearing John repeat his testimony that this is the Lamb of God, the two disciples follow Jesus, but in their modesty they do not dare to speak to Him. Here is the fruit and the successful termination of John's mission to win followers for Christ.

Jesus asks them what they wish; He knew well, but desires to invite them to speak freely. Like disciples, they

inquire about His dwelling place that they may meet Him there in quiet. Probably it was the Sabbath and, since the Jews were forbidden to travel on the holyday, the followers of John had erected temporary shelters along the bank of the river. Accepting our Lord's invitation, the two accompany Him to His dwelling and remain there the rest of the day. The meeting took place about four o'clock in the afternoon, for it was about the tenth hour and the Jews counted from sunrise to sunset, the first hour being about six in the morning.

The two disciples were Andrew and John; the latter is not named, but St. John never mentions his own name in his Gospel and it is difficult to see why, if the second disciple were anyone else, his name should not have been given.

113. *The first disciples*, John I, 41-51. The effect of our Lord's words in this first conversation with the earliest disciples sent Him by John the Baptist is seen in the zeal with which they set out to bring others to Him. Andrew brings his brother Simon, who was also probably a follower of the Baptist. By promising to change his name our Lord marks him out for special work, strengthens his faith, and appeals to his temperamental energy and ambition. From the word "first" (vs. 41) used with Andrew's calling of Peter, it appears that John also brought his brother, James the Greater. The next day, when setting out for Galilee, Jesus calls Philip, a more simple, quiet character for whom a direct command is enough. All these first disciples were Galileans from the town of Bethsaida on the shore of the Lake of Genesareth.

As the little group proceeds toward the north after leaving the Jordan, Philip finds Nathanael and joyfully tells him the good news that they have found the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. Nathanael receives the information doubtfully, speaking slightly of Nazareth either because of local jealousy or because the Messiah was to come from Bethlehem; still he consents to go to meet Jesus. Our Lord

praises him as a man of upright integrity, calling him an Israelite without guile and implying that his sincerity made him worthy of this name which was the Jew's favorite name for themselves as the chosen family of Jacob (Israel, Gen. 32, 28). Nathanael is surprised that Jesus should know him since they had never met before. Jesus increases his astonishment and wins his faith by revealing some secret of his life, probably some special prayer or spiritual crisis in his past. Nathanael enthusiastically acknowledges Jesus as the Messias, as the Son of God; though he does not yet fully realize His divinity, he has at least some shadowy inkling of it. In the lists of Apostles Nathanael is called Bartholomew, i.e., son of Tholomew.

Jesus promises that he will see still greater manifestations of His divinity. It is uncertain to what particular events our Lord makes reference; perhaps to His resurrection, His ascension, His miracles, the multiplied graces of His ministry, or to the Last Judgment. There is here an evident allusion to Jacob's dream (Gen. 28, 11 ff.), and as this dream occurred at Bethel, it is inferred that this meeting also took place there.

114. *The first miracle*, John 2, 1-11.

**A. Circumstances.** As in the preceding section, St. John is careful to mark the exact time, "the third day," but this is somewhat indefinite, since the point from which the enumeration is made is not sure. Perhaps it was the third day after the first disciples conversed with Jesus, or after the meeting with Nathanael. Later on custom prescribed Wednesday as the ordinary day for weddings, and this custom may have prevailed even at this time. The traditional site of Cana is the present Kefr-Kenna, a village some five miles northeast of Nazareth. Jesus and Mary were invited to the marriage as relatives or friends of the bride or groom. Joseph, according to the accepted opinion, had died some years before. Jesus goes to the feast to sanctify marriage and to take occasion to manifest His divine power in order

to strengthen the faith of His disciples. Wedding feasts lasted several days, or even a week or two; the time was given over to merrymaking, dances, banquets, and games. On this occasion the supply of wine was exhausted owing either to the poverty of the hosts or to the unexpected arrival of these new guests.

**B. The miracle.** The Blessed Virgin, in her concern for the feelings of the hosts, appeals to Jesus to relieve their embarrassment. Her words later on to the servants show that she expects Him to perform a miracle. This was natural since she knew His divinity and power; perhaps, as some have suggested, Jesus had already performed some miracle privately. With perfect confidence in Jesus she merely proposes the difficulty, "they have no wine."

The answer given by Jesus contains nothing of reproof or severity. "Woman" was an address of courteous respect, even of tenderness (cf. John 19, 26 "Woman, behold thy Son"; Homer, *Iliad*, 3,204). "What is that to Me and to thee?" These words are interpreted in various ways as they occur in the Greek text (*τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί*; "What to Me and to thee?"). As translated in our English version, they favor the meaning, "that is no concern of ours." But the expression occurs often in Scripture and also in profane literature with the force "what is common to Me and to thee?" It then expresses denial or dissent. Our Lord conveys the idea that the old relations of the home life at Nazareth are ended, for in His Messianic work He must depend solely on the Father. The natural affection between mother and son must not interfere with that work; supernatural charity must rule supreme. "My hour is not yet come," i.e., the time for manifesting Myself as the Messiah. But in fact, since this is the will of the Father, He advances that time because of the intercession of His Blessed Mother; if Mary had not interceded, the miracle would not have taken place.

In themselves our Lord's words are obscure, but they become clear in the light of the Blessed Virgin's remark to

the servants when she tells them to follow His orders. This implies that she knew her request had been granted, whether this knowledge came from our Lord's tone, or His look, or from something He added in explanation.

Frequent ablutions were required by Jewish custom, and to provide for these there were prepared here six stone jars. Each held eighteen or twenty gallons (a measure was about nine gallons). Jesus orders them filled with water, changes the water into wine, and tells the servants to carry some of the wine to the one in charge of the feast. The miracle is evident and serves to increase the faith of the disciples. St. John calls attention to the fact that this was the first miracle, for from the Synoptics it might have been thought that other miracles had been worked previously.

After the marriage feast our Lord spends a short time in Capernaum on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.

115. *The brethren of our Lord.* The persons mentioned by St. John as the brethren of Jesus were His cousins or other distant relatives. In Hebrew "brother" is used in a wide sense for any relative and even for friends or fellow citizens. Mary, the mother of two of these "brothers" (Matt. 27, 56), was a relative, perhaps a sister or sister-in-law, of the Blessed Virgin (John 19, 25). The perpetual virginity of the Blessed Virgin is a defined dogma, while that of St. Joseph is held at present in the general teaching of the Church; hence, those persons could not have been brothers or half-brothers of Jesus.

The following texts illustrate the general use of the word "brother": Gen. 14, 16, Lot, the nephew of Abraham, is called his brother (cf. Gen. 12, 5); Num. 16, 10, the descendants of Levi, though only cousins to each other, are called brethren; Num. 20, 14, Moses, sending messengers to the king of Edom, says, "Thus saith thy brother Israel"; Amos 1, 9, allies are called "brethren"; Job 6, 15, Job speaks of his friends as "my brethren." In the Acts and Epistles all Christians are "brethren"; cf. Acts 1, 15, "Peter, rising

up in the midst of the brethren, said (now the number of persons together was about an hundred and twenty)."

In the Gospels the chief references to the brethren of Jesus are: John 2, 12, "After this He went down to Capharnaum, He and His mother, and His brethren, and His disciples." Matt. 12, 46, "As He was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold His mother and His brethren stood without, seeking to speak to Him" (cf. parallels in Mark 3, 31; Luke 8, 19). Matt. 13, 55-56, "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brethren James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Jude: and His sisters, are they not all with us?" (cf. Mark 6, 3); John 7, 3, "And His brethren said to Him: Pass from hence and go into Judea."



# Chapter XVIII

## THE PUBLIC LIFE OF CHRIST

### II. Period of the Proclamation of the Kingdom

116. This period extends from April, A.D. 26 to April, A.D. 27.

A. *Sources:* John 2, 13-4, 54; Mark 1, 14-2, 22; Luke 4, 14.15; 4, 31-5, 39; Matt. 4, 12-25; 8, 1-4.14-17; 9, 1-17.

B. *Events:*

	John	Mark	Luke	Matt.
The traders driven from the Temple.....	2, 13-25			
Nicodemus .....	3, 1-21			
Preaching in Judea....	3, 22			
Second testimony of John .....	3, 23-36			
Imprisonment of John.		(6, 17-20)	(3, 19.20)	(14, 3-5)
Jesus goes to Galilee...	4, 1-3	1, 14	4, 14	4, 12
The Samaritans.....	4, 4-42			
Preaching in Galilee...	4, 43-45	1, 14.15	4, 15	4, 17
Ruler's son healed at Cana .....	4, 46-54			
At Capharnaum .....			4, 31.32	4, 13-16
The first Apostles and the miraculous draught of fishes....		1, 16-20	5, 1-11	4, 18-22
Demoniac cured .....		1, 21-28	4, 33-37	
Peter's mother-in-law and others cured....		1, 29-34	4, 38-41	8, 14-17
Mission in Galilee....		1, 35-39	4, 42-44	4, 23-25
Leper healed .....		1, 40-45	5, 12-16	8, 1-4
Paralytic cured at Ca- pharnaum .....		2, 1-13	5, 17-26	9, 1-8
Call of Matthew and question of fasting..		2, 14-22	5, 27-39	9, 9-17

**C. Summary.** Jesus goes to Jerusalem for the first Pasch of the public life. He drives the traffickers from the Temple, answers the objections of the Jewish authorities, and holds a long discourse with Nicodemus. For some seven months He preaches in Judea and receives further testimony from John the Baptist. After the imprisonment of John by Herod Antipas, Jesus retires into Galilee to avoid conflict with the Pharisees. On the way He converts some of the Samaritans. This was probably about December, since it was about four months before the harvest which came toward the end of April, the first-fruits being offered on the second day of the paschal festival.

In Galilee He calls permanently the first Apostles, Peter, Andrew, John, and James the Greater, and later Matthew. With Capharnaum as a center, He preaches throughout Galilee and performs many miracles.

**D. Features.** In Judea the religious leaders challenge His right to exercise authority in the Temple and continue hostile, but many of the people believe in Him. In Galilee, beginning with the simple announcement of the kingdom, Jesus gradually unfolds His doctrine and wins the admiration of all, since He speaks as one having power. This together with His miracles stirs popular enthusiasm, and people flock to Him from all sides.

This and the following periods will be considered under the headings: A, Teaching; B, Miracles; C, Opposition.

#### **117. *Teaching during the second period.***

**A. The clearing of the Temple,** John 2, 13-25. Our Lord begins His ministry in Judea by showing His Messianic authority in driving the traffickers out of the Temple.

The buying, selling, and money-changing were carried on in the Court of the Gentiles. Animals and birds were sold for the sacrifices and were guaranteed by the priests as unblemished and so fit to be offered to God. This was a real convenience for the people, since it saved them the trouble of bringing the victims in from outside the Temple area

and avoided the risk of having their offering declared unfit because of one of the many defects which the Law and custom had laid down as excluding victims from the sacrifices. The money-changers were also serving a useful purpose, for all Temple payments had to be made with the "Temple shekel" which was not in general circulation. Greek, Roman, and other coins were "unclean" and frequently bore the images of the pagan gods and, as these were the coins in ordinary use, they had to be exchanged for the Temple currency. For this exchange a small fee was charged (unlawfully, it seems), and it has been estimated that the bankers' profits must have totaled about \$40,000 a year.

However convenient, this trading was unbecoming the house of God where quiet and decorum should reign. The "Jews," i.e., the priests and leaders in charge of the Temple, do not question the justice of our Lord's condemnation of this traffic, but refusing, despite John's testimony, to recognize Him as the Messiah, they demand some striking proof that He has authority from heaven. In addressing the merchants Jesus had already to some extent declared His authority, for He had spoken of God as His Father and that obviously in a higher sense than could be used of other men. Now He answers obscurely by referring to His resurrection; if they destroy His body, He will raise it up in three days. Though even His disciples failed to understand His words at the time, they were strengthened in faith at this manifestation of zeal foretold in Ps. 68, 10. Many of the people believed in Jesus because of some miracles not detailed by St. John, but their faith was not stable and Jesus did not trust Himself to them.

**B. Nicodemus,** John 3, 1-21. Among those who believed in Jesus with at least an incipient faith was Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a ruler, i.e., probably the head of one of the rich and influential families and a member of the Sanhedrin. He had the earnestness to seek further enlighten-

ment in a private interview. With him our Lord insists on the necessity of baptism; to enter the kingdom a man must be born again through water and the Holy Ghost, for this is a spiritual life where mere physical birth avails nothing. This supernatural life is not directly perceptible by the senses, but it is seen in its effects, just as the night wind, then gently blowing, could be heard but not seen.

When Nicodemus inquires further how this supernatural life can be attained, Jesus first humbles him, a master in Israel, for his slowness in believing. In speaking of baptism, Jesus had been dealing with something earthly, the rite by which men here on earth enter the kingdom; if Nicodemus had such difficulty in understanding this simpler part, how will he be able to receive the deeper mysteries? Then Jesus touches on some of these mysteries: the Incarnation (vss. 11.13.16), the redemption through the passion of Christ (vs. 14), the great proof of God's love for men (vs. 16), and the supreme necessity of faith (vss. 15-21).

**C. The Samaritan woman,** John 4, 1-42. After preaching in Judea for about seven months (John 3, 22) our Lord sets out for Galilee. On the way He had to pass through Samaria, a country inhabited by a race of mixed Jewish and Gentile blood and bitterly hostile to the Jews. After the exile the Jews had excluded the Samaritans from participation in their worship, and the Samaritans had then set up a religion of their own, founded partly on the Law of Moses and partly on pagan superstitions, and had erected their temple on Mount Gerazim near Sichem, the modern Nablous.

Sitting wearily on the low stone wall surrounding Jacob's well at Sichar near Sichem, Jesus converts one of the native women. By a natural gradation He speaks to her of the graces of salvation, figured by the "living water," and convinces her that He is a prophet, i.e., one sent to speak in the name of God, by showing a knowledge of her unsavory past. Then He defends the privileges of the Jews as the

chosen people of God and announces that a new dispensation has begun in which God seeks among all nations for true adorers in spirit and in truth. No longer will fitting sacrifice be confined to one locality, Jerusalem, for the symbolic rites of Judaism are to give way to the reality which they only foreshadowed. Jesus does not condemn churches and ceremonies, but only such mere externalism as the Pharisees had introduced. External worship must be vivified by that which comes from within, from a heart free from sin and devoted to God. Finally, Jesus closes the conversation by openly declaring that He is the expected Messias.

On the return of the disciples, our Lord manifests the ardent zeal for souls that burns in His Sacred Heart. The fields are white with the harvest; souls are ready to be gathered to the service of God, and Christ's eagerness to gather them sustains Him as men are sustained by food. The Apostles are to share in this work; Jesus sows the seeds of salvation, they will reap the harvest of souls.

**D. The Gospel in Galilee,** Mark 1, 14-2, 22; Luke 4, 14-15.31-44; Matt. 4, 12-25. After a few days spent in Samaria, Jesus opens His ministry in Galilee. Making Capharnaum His headquarters He traverses the whole region preaching in the synagogues on the Sabbaths (Mark 1, 38.39). His doctrine and the tone of authority and finality with which it is presented creates general astonishment and admiration (Mark 1, 22; Luke 4, 15). His teaching is in marked contrast with that of the scribes who quibble on subtle points of the Law and rely on arguments based on the authority of their predecessors. In general Jesus announces that the time fixed by God has arrived and His kingdom is now being established. Two things are required; penance, not as a mere preparation as with the Baptist, but as an actual entry into the kingdom; and faith in the Gospel, i.e., the sincere acceptance of the glad tidings now offered (Mark 1, 15). Our Lord proves that He has the power to forgive sins, a power belonging to God alone (Mark 2, 1-12),

asserts that He is come to call sinners (Mark 2, 17), and that this is a time of joy for His disciples (Mark 2, 18-22).

118. *The call of the first disciples*, Mark 1, 16-20; Luke 5, 1-11; Matt. 4, 18-22.

Though Jesus had begun to gather disciples immediately after His return from the desert (John 1, 37 ff.), they did not stay with Him constantly but continued in some measure their ordinary life; now He calls upon them to give up everything and devote themselves entirely to following Him. Owing to the pressure of the crowd which had come to listen to His teaching along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, our Lord goes aboard Peter's fishing boat and preaches from it. Then He rewards the faith of His disciples by the miraculous draught of fishes and promises that they will be fishers of men. Later, when they have landed, He calls Peter and Andrew to follow Him, and then John and James.

119. *The call of St. Matthew*, Mark 2, 14-17; Luke 5, 27-32; Matt. 9, 9-13. Matthew was a publican, i.e., a collector of custom; he probably lived in Capharnaum, for it was on the highroad where such taxes would be paid. Mark and Luke call him Levi, but there can be no doubt that they refer to the same person and event as the First Gospel (cf. § 62). To honor the Master, Matthew gave a great feast in his own house and invited his friends; naturally many of these were publicans also, and it seemed unbecoming in the eyes of the Pharisees that Jesus should associate with such persons, who, as a class, were despised for their avarice and for their representing, in Judea, the hated foreign rulers; in the territory of Herod Antipas they represented a native prince, it is true, but this did not free them from the contempt felt for their class.

120. *The new teaching*, Mark 2, 21-22; Luke 5, 36-39; Matt. 9, 16-17.

In two comparisons, classed sometimes as parables, Jesus emphasizes the difference between the Gospel and the former teachings. He is proclaiming something new, and

to receive it, there is need of a new spirit. He explains the reluctance of the Jews to accept the new doctrine; like old wine, the former teaching seems better because they are accustomed to it.

121. *The miracles of the second period.*

**A. The purpose of the miracles in our Lord's ministry.** There was a threefold purpose behind our Lord's miracles:

a) They were intended to prove His divine mission. This is God's way of putting the stamp of His approval on a person or a work. When at times Christ reproves those who seek signs, it is because they are merely curious for wonders, are weak in faith, and refuse to accept the evidence already supplied in abundance. Sometimes He forbids the news of a miracle to be published because the consequent enthusiasm of the people would endanger His ministry. When He imposes silence on the evil spirits, it is because He is unwilling to have the demons bear witness to Him.

b) They were intended as manifestations of His mercy on the afflicted.

c) They were symbols of His power over the diseases of the soul and over all supernatural forces.

**B. The number of miracles in the second period.** Even from the beginning of His public life our Lord's miracles were very numerous and stand out not as exceptions in His ministry but rather as its ordinary accompaniment. In this period detailed accounts are given of six, while there are many general expressions covering miracles not further described. Of His work in Judea, St. John says: "Many believed in His name, seeing His signs which He did" (2, 23), and Nicodemus testifies that "no man can do these signs which Thou dost unless God be with him" (John 3, 2). The Synoptics speak in the same way of His work in Galilee, e.g., "And He healed many that were troubled with divers diseases; and He cast out many devils" (Mark 1, 34); "All they that had any sick with divers diseases, brought

them to Him. But He laying His hands on every one of them healed them. And the devils went out from many, crying out and saying: Thou art the Son of God" (Luke 4, 40.41); "Jesus went about all Galilee . . . healing all manner of sickness and every infirmity, among the people" (Matt. 4, 23; cf. also Matt. 4, 24; 8, 16; Mark 1, 39; Luke 5, 15).

**C. The kinds of miracles.** Of the six miracles described at length, four are cures:

1. The son of the ruler of Capharnaum (John 4, 46);
2. Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1, 29; Luke 4, 38; Matt. 8, 14);
3. A leper (Mark 1, 40; Luke 5, 12; Matt. 8, 2);
4. A paralytic (Mark 2, 3; Luke 5, 18; Matt. 9, 2).

One is a deliverance of a man possessed by the devil (Mark 1, 23; Luke 4, 33). One is over irrational nature (the miraculous draught of fishes, Luke 5, 1).

## 122. *Opposition during the second period.*

**A. In Judea** the Jews challenge our Lord's right to exercise authority in the Temple (John 2, 18). His answer is enigmatical, as often to those ill disposed; its meaning is, "if you will not now believe, at least My resurrection will be a convincing sign." Further open opposition was not attempted at this time, but the hostility of the Pharisees increased in proportion to our Lord's success in winning the hearts of the people. St. John (4, 1-3) gives this hostility as the reason why Jesus left Judea for Galilee. The same reason is implied in the Synoptics (Mark 1, 14; Luke 4, 14; Matt. 4, 12), since they connect His going to Galilee with His having heard of the imprisonment of the Baptist. Jesus was evidently seeking to avoid some danger. The source of this danger could not have been Herod Antipas who had imprisoned John, for by going to Galilee our Lord was entering the territory under the jurisdiction of Herod. The real cause of John's imprisonment and the real source of danger for Jesus must then have been the envy of the



Pharisees in Judea. The Greek verb used by St. Matthew (*ἀνεχώρησεν*, "he retired") implies the going from a place of danger to one of security; Judea could have been more dangerous than Galilee only if the danger threatened from the side of the Pharisees, and not from Herod.

B. **In Galilee**, farther removed from the center of religious authority in Jerusalem, the people receive the glad tidings with hearty welcome, and the opposition is weak, confining itself to trying to find matter for criticism. The scribes and Pharisees question His power to forgive sins (Luke 5, 21), protest against His eating with sinners (Luke 5, 30), and criticize His disciples for not fasting like the disciples of the Baptist (Luke 5, 35).

## Chapter XIX

### THE PUBLIC LIFE OF CHRIST

#### III. Period of the Spread and Organization of the Kingdom

123. This period extends from April, A.D. 27, to March, A.D. 28.

A. *Sources:* John 5, 1-6, 21; Mark 2, 23-6, 52; Luke 4, 16-30; 6, 1-9, 17; Matt. chaps. 5-7; 8, 5-13; 8, 23-34; 9, 18-11, 19; 12, 1-14, 33.

B. *Events:*

	John	Mark	Luke	Matt.
Paralytic cured at Jerusalem .....	5, 1-47			
Ears of corn plucked on Sabbath .....		2, 23-28	6, 1-5	12, 1-8
Withered hand cured ..		3, 1-6	6, 1-11	12, 9-14
Cures in Galilee .....		3, 7-12		12, 15-21
Twelve Apostles chosen		3, 13-19	6, 12-16	10, 2-4
Sermon on the Mount.			6, 17-49	cc. 5.6.7
Centurion's servant cured .....			7, 1-10	8, 5-13
Son of the widow of Naim restored to life			7, 11-17	
Message from John .....			7, 18-35	11, 2-19
Sinful woman .....			7, 36-50	
Second mission through Galilee .....			8, 1-3	
Blind and dumb demoniac cured .....		3, 20-30	11, 14-26	12, 22-37
Mother and relatives of Jesus .....		3, 31-35	8, 19-21	12, 46-50
Parables on the Kingdom .....		4, 1-34	8, 4-18	13, 1-53

Tempest calmed . . . . .		4, 35-40	8, 22-25	8, 23-27
The possessed of Ger- gesa . . . . .		5, 1-20	8, 26-39	8, 28-34
Daughter of Jāirus and woman with issue of blood . . . . .		5, 21-43	8, 40-56	9, 18-26
Two blind men and a demoniac cured . . . . .				9, 27-34
At Nazareth . . . . .	(4, 44-45)	6, 1-6	4, 16-30	13, 54-58
Third mission in Gali- lee; preaching of the Twelve . . . . .		6, 6-13	9, 1-6	9, 35-11, 1
John beheaded . . . . .		6, 14-29	9, 7-9	14, 1-12
First multiplication of loaves . . . . .	6, 1-15	6, 30-44	9, 10-17	14, 13-21
Jesus walks on the water . . . . .	6, 16-21	6, 45-52		14, 22-33

**C. Summary.** Jesus goes to Jerusalem for the second Pasch of the public life, cures a paralytic, and is opposed by the Jews on the charge of violating the Sabbath and claiming to be the Son of God.

Returning to Galilee, He begins the organization of the kingdom by selecting His twelve Apostles, and clarifies its meaning in the Sermon on the Mount. He further establishes His claims by numerous miracles, forgives the fallen woman who had repented, and answers the messengers sent by John the Baptist to inquire if He is the Messias. He sends the twelve to preach to the Jews.

Meantime in the midst of the general popularity, there is a notable growth of opposition. He is accused of violating the Sabbath; there are frequent criticisms and insults from the scribes and Pharisees; His relatives become uneasy. Under the influence of the scribes, the confidence of the people is shaken, and Jesus begins to veil His teaching under the form of parables.

**D. Features.** The kingdom is organized in the twelve Apostles; its nature is more fully explained. In Judea there is violent opposition when Jesus openly proclaims His

divinity, and the Jews seek His life. In Galilee there is a strong undercurrent of opposition, but in general the kingdom spreads amid great enthusiasm which reaches its height after the multiplication of the loaves when the people wish to proclaim Him king.

124. *Teaching during the third period.* In Jerusalem Jesus affirms His equality with the Father (John 5, 17-30), and offers the following proofs of His divine mission:

- a) The testimony of John the Baptist, 33-35;
- b) His own miracles, 36;
- c) His Father's testimony (in the miracles or at His baptism), 37;
- d) The Scriptures, 38-40.

He blames the Jews for their unbelief; it is due to their lack of love for God and to their seeking glory from men and not from God, John 5, 41-44.

In Galilee He is criticized for not observing the Sabbath properly (Mark 2, 23-3, 6; Luke 6, 1-11; Matt. 12, 1-14). In His reply Jesus brings forward two examples: David ate the Temple bread which only the priests were permitted to eat, and in the Temple the priests perform work on the Sabbath. Applying these examples, He asserts that One greater than the Temple is here, that the Sabbath is made for man (and so its observance is not to injure body or soul), that mercy comes before such observance, and that He is Lord of the Sabbath.

**A. The sermon on the mount,** Matt. 5-7; Luke 6, 17-49.

*Summary.* In this discourse our Lord sets forth some of the fundamental moral principles of the Christian life. Detachment from earthly things and a sincere, generous practice of virtue from the pure motive of pleasing God are the characteristics of the members of His kingdom. The current ideals fostered by the Pharisees are either false or inadequate; the kingdom of Christ is spiritual and far

different from the worldly pomp and pleasure imagined by the leaders of the nation. This spiritual ideal, presented only imperfectly by the Old Law, is now brought to its perfection by Christ.

He begins with a brief enumeration of the virtues which admit men to a share in His kingdom; these are the eight beatitudes to each of which is attached the promise of the kingdom (5, 3-16). This introduction is followed by the general declaration that He is announcing a doctrine which fulfills perfectly what the Law had begun in an imperfect manner, and which rises superior to the justice of the scribes and Pharisees; this general declaration is illustrated by explanations of the prohibitions against murder, adultery, and blasphemy, and by an extension of the precept of brotherly love so as to include even enemies (5, 17-48).

His followers have their hearts detached from the desire for human praise and directed solely to God, and it is His approval alone that they seek in the giving of alms, in prayer, and in fasting (6, 1-18). Their hearts are also free from inordinate love and solicitude for earthly possessions and are fixed on the acquirement of heavenly treasures through whole-hearted service of God (6, 19-34). They shun rash judgments and unkind criticism of others, devoting themselves to their own correction and practicing zeal with prudence (7, 1-6). Recognizing their own weakness, they pray for divine help with constancy and confidence (7, 7-11). In dealing with their fellow men they follow the golden rule of treating others as they would wish to be treated by others (7, 12).

The practice of these virtues is not attractive to human nature, but Christ's disciples must cultivate the self-abnegation needed to enable them to tread the way of perfection (7, 13-14). False teachers will try to mislead them, but the wicked lives of such men will expose their pretensions (7, 15-23). In conclusion, our Lord exhorts His hearers to reduce His doctrine to practice and contrasts the security of

His faithful followers who build upon the firm foundation of His teaching with the ruin that will overtake those who fail to follow Him (7, 24-27).

a) *The beatitudes*, Matt. 5, 3-16. The poor in spirit are those who with the help of divine grace are free from the allurements of worldly possessions. Strictly this means actual poverty sought and borne for supernatural motives; it includes, however, those who, though actually rich, are not unduly attached to their wealth, but not those who, though actually poor, are unduly eager for riches. In themselves riches are an enticement, drawing men away from God and spiritual aspirations and leading them to seek their happiness in wealth and the things money can buy; whether rich or poor, the Christian must resist this enticement, and such resistance is most efficaciously shown in the actual bearing of poverty for the love of God. All are not bound to this more perfect means of resistance, since this is a counsel of perfection, but all are bound to such detachment from their actual or prospective possessions as will keep them faithful and generous in God's service. This cuts off all sinful methods of acquiring, retaining, or increasing wealth, and demands a readiness to use worldly goods for worthy purposes. Some interpret "poor in spirit" to mean the humble, but this can be accepted only as a consequence of the first meaning, insofar as a lack of worldly goods gives occasion for practicing humility and fosters the spirit of humility in the soul.

No matter how sheltered, everyone is exposed to trials and contradictions; in such times of stress the natural impulse is to impatience, anger, resentment, or revenge, but Christ's followers will be meek, will manifest only patience, humility, and forbearance, and will accept adversity in submission to the divine will, recognizing God's providence in all things. This disposition is closely connected with the poverty of the first beatitude, being necessary for the practice

of poverty and being fostered in turn by the privations and humiliations which poverty brings.

Sorrow, too, comes to all men; it is the natural sadness of heart caused by the absence of some good thing desired or the presence of some evil. The citizens of Christ's kingdom will find many things to make them mourn—their own sins and the sins of others, recurrent trials, temptations, and disappointments, and above all, their ardent desire to be united with God in the perfect knowledge and love enjoyed by the blessed in heaven.

Justice includes all that God wishes to be in man; it is the perfect fulfillment of the Divine Will and so means complete sanctity. This is to be desired not in ordinary measure but with an ardor and constancy comparable to the cravings of hunger and thirst; unceasing effort is to be made to advance in the way of holiness. The first three beatitudes deal with the purifying of the heart from attachment to worldly riches, honors, and joys; the fourth beatitude reveals what is to replace these evil or dangerous desires; the heart is not to remain empty in a sort of stoical insensibility, but all its fire of love is to be employed in seeking God and in making every action correspond to His Will.

The virtue of mercy prompts men to come to the aid of their fellows when they stand in need of spiritual or material help. The spiritual and corporal works of mercy will flourish in the kingdom of Christ; indifference to the sufferings of others will find no place there; no effort will be spared to bring relief and, where this is impossible, there will be at least sympathy and kindness. Indifference to others, hardness of heart, severity, and cruelty, are largely due to avarice, anger, love of pleasure, and forgetfulness of God; hence, mercy follows closely on the virtues recommended in the previous beatitudes and gives them practical expression.

The pure of heart are those who keep themselves free

from all sin, not only of deed but also of thought and desire. The heart is looked upon as the center of the affections; when it is pure, the affections are fixed only on what is good and there is sincere devotion to God as well as exterior submission to His Will.

God is the God of peace, and His children promote peace in their own souls and in the souls of others; they avoid stirring up strife because they are patient, kind, and orderly; they try to reconcile those at variance with themselves or with others, and according to their opportunities they seek to bring sinners to peace with God.

Virtue cannot be practiced long without meeting opposition; malice or ignorance or misunderstanding will frequently raise a storm of persecution against the just. Patience and fortitude in bearing such trials will show the sincerity and courage of Christ's followers.

To each of the beatitudes is attached a blessing; the form varies, but the essential idea is the same; these virtues are needed to make men citizens of the kingdom being established by Christ and they give them a share in the blessings which that kingdom brings imperfectly on earth but perfectly in heaven, the life of grace here and the life of glory for eternity.

These virtues are opposed to the ideas and practices of the worldly-minded in general; they are in particular opposed to the spirit of the Pharisees of our Lord's time, and in laying down these virtues as the fundamental laws of His kingdom He brings the true nature of that kingdom into sharp contrast with their erroneous ideas of what the Messianic kingdom would be. Neither they nor the mass of the worldly-minded would accept the kingdom; hence, conflict was inevitable. To strengthen His followers our Lord expands the idea of the blessings of persecution borne for His sake; such trials should not discourage nor sadden them, but rather fill them with joy because of the reward awaiting



them in heaven. Opposition has always been the lot of God's chosen ones.

As another source of courage, as well as a new insight into nature of the work before them, Jesus next introduces the thought that His followers are to be the instruments of God for the salvation of the world. They are the salt of the earth, a city set on a mountain top, the light of the world. As salt gives taste to food and preserves it from corruption, so the faithful by word and example make men acceptable to God and keep them from sin. In a sinful world they stand conspicuous by contrast and invite all to seek refuge among them. When left to themselves, men stumble through life in the gloom of sin and ignorance; the faithful spread the light of Christ which banishes this darkness. But to be fit instruments for spreading the kingdom they must persevere in its spirit; if they lose that spirit, they will be as useless as salt that has lost its savor and is thrown away as worthless. The salt of Palestine, secured from the Dead Sea, was mixed with impurities, often lost its taste, and was cast into the street in the careless fashion of the Orient where the street was the receptacle for refuse; or the illustration may be founded on a mere supposition (if salt were to lose its savor). The small lamps of those days also would become useless if, instead of being mounted on a stand, they were placed under a bushel or a dining couch. The light of good example is to be allowed to shine forth not for vanity but to lead men to glorify God by imitating it.

*b) The New Law perfects the Old, Matt. 5, 17-48.* Having drawn the broad outlines of His moral teaching, Christ makes clear its relations to the Old Law, the highest and purest religious system so far revealed to man. He has not come, as some might have thought, to destroy the Law but to fulfill it. The Law is the expression of the Divine Will which cannot be frustrated; not even the least of its precepts

can be abolished, except on condition that the purpose of such precepts has been fulfilled, and some of them will be fulfilled only at the end of the world when there will be "new heavens and a new earth" (2 Pet. 3, 13). Christ fulfills the Law by stripping away from it the false interpretations of the Pharisees, by developing its teaching to the highest perfection, by replacing its figurative ceremonies with the realities which they foreshadowed, and by giving an abundance of grace to carry out God's Will. He likewise fulfills the prophets since they foretold the establishment of His kingdom.

To emphasize His meaning, our Lord uses the term "Amen," a strong affirmation with something of the solemnity of an oath. The apparent insignificance of some of the old precepts is figuratively expressed by "jot", the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet and by "tittle," a little line by which some of the Hebrew letters were distinguished from others similar in form (*Beth* and *Kaf*, *Daleth* and *Resh*), or a small line placed as an ornament on some letters (such ornamentation was used in later Hebrew script, but it is not certain whether it was used in the time of Christ). Such is the sanctity of even these minor precepts that whoever nullifies one of them and teaches others to do so will receive only the lowest place in the kingdom of heaven, while those who honor them in practice and teaching will attain to the highest glory. But there is another class of men who will be altogether excluded from the kingdom; these are the ones whose justice does not surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees who gloried in the exactness of their external fulfillment of the Law; the New Law demands also internal observance, the conformity of the heart, of the interior disposition, with the requirements of holiness.

Our Lord illustrates the greater perfection of the New Law by applying it to some of the old precepts. He begins with anger; the Old Law condemned murder, but Christ places the interior feeling of anger on the same plane, not

that every angry feeling is seriously sinful but the sin of anger is classed with mortal sins (*mortale ex genere suo*), though it admits of degrees some of which are venial sins since the matter is of small importance (a class of sins not admitting this smallness of matter or *parvitas materiae* is called *mortale ex toto genere suo*). Anger is the root of murder; it is more perfect to tear out the root than merely to cut off the stalk; this is St. John's thought when he says "whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer" (1 John 3, 15). The fault becomes worse when the angry feeling finds vent in words of contempt; *raca* means a worthless, stupid, brainless person, and expresses contempt for him as one lacking man's natural gift of reason, while "fool" goes further and condemns him as one who denies the very existence of God and hence is impious and abandoned by God. The degrees in the fault are indicated by gradations in the punishments which are given in forms familiar to Christ's hearers; the judgment refers to the local courts of seven judges for the hearing of less serious cases, the council is the Sanhedrin of seventy-two members which convened at Jerusalem and had jurisdiction over all crimes, and the gehenna of fire is hell, our English text bringing out its meaning but changing the wording. The valley of Hinnom, running along the south of Jerusalem, was looked upon by the Jews as a place of abomination and taken as a symbol of hell, because their ancestors had there burned their children as victims to the idol Moloch. In the words "but I say to you" Christ asserts His plenary power as a lawgiver and places Himself on a par with God, the legislator of the Old Law. After condemning anger, He shows that reconciliation between brothers is to be more esteemed even than religious sacrifices, and He then exhorts all to make their peace with God before they are brought before His final tribunal for condemnation; the exhortation is given in the form of a parable; directly it shows the prudence of settling disputes out of court, but the application to offenses against God is

obvious. Since Christ is speaking throughout of serious sins, the prison mentioned in the application is hell according to the common interpretation, and hence the existence of purgatory cannot be proved from this text.

Matt. 5, 27-32. Impure looks voluntarily indulged in are condemned as adultery of the heart; though the Law forbade unchaste desires (Exod. 20, 14-17), the Pharisees thought only of avoiding the exterior act. The occasions of sin must be avoided even at the sacrifice of things as dear as the right hand or the right eye; these words are not to be taken literally since mutilation of the body is wrong and the sinful occasion can be avoided in other ways. The sanctity of marriage is restored to its pristine vigor; to prevent greater evils, permission had been given the Jews to dissolve a marriage by complete divorce when the wife had been guilty of adultery (Deut. 24, 1), but our Lord declares that the bond endures till the death of one of the couple. If a man dismisses his wife, he exposes her to the danger of adultery since she will probably marry again; if the reason for the dismissal was adultery already committed, he does not expose her to this danger for by her sin she has already become an adulteress, but even then the marriage bond remains since anyone marrying such a woman commits adultery. The indissolubility of matrimony is more fully set forth in Matt. 19, 3-12; Mark 10, 2-12; Luke 16, 18 (cf. § 133); the marriage bond is from God and no man has power to break it.

Matt. 5, 33-37. The Second Commandment forbids vain oaths; Christ excludes all unnecessary oaths and commands His disciples to be content with simple affirmation and negation. Oaths are made necessary by man's insincerity or distrust, and so they are from evil. Since swearing by creatures is in reality swearing by the Creator, the practice of looking lightly upon such oaths must be repudiated. Among Christians there should exist such absolute confidence in each other that oaths would not be needed; but

until this ideal condition is realized, oaths may be taken under proper circumstances.

Matt. 5, 38-48. Injuries are to be borne with patience and repaid with kindness. Though resistance to evil may at times be a duty, and reasonable self-defense is permitted, still hatred, anger, and the desire for revenge are opposed to Christian meekness and charity. The examples proposed by Christ explain the principle, and like the principle itself they are subject to the restrictions laid down by the glory of God, the good of society, and the correction of the offender.

The crown of charity is the love of enemies. Love of neighbor was enjoined by the Law, but this was interpreted to mean only Jews and those who had been received among them and to sanction hatred of outsiders. Christ demands that there be good will toward enemies and that this good will lead to kind actions and to prayer for their benefit. As this is extremely hard for human nature, He adds a compelling motive for such love; true children of God, they will imitate Him in His bestowal of gifts upon all men irrespective of their friendship or hostility to Him. Besides, they are called to the perfect service of God and this requires something more than the love of friends since such natural love is common even among publicans and heathens. The measure of the perfection to be aimed at is the very perfection of God Himself; this divine perfection is unattainable by man, but they are to strive to approach it more and more closely.

c) *Purity of intention*, Matt. 6, 1-18. The preceding section was devoted to showing the superiority of Christ's doctrine to the precepts of the Old Law; there is no opposition between the two, but the New Law fulfills the Old by carrying its precepts to greater perfection. The present section, leaving the theoretical aside, takes up some of the chief religious practices of the Jews (justice or the works of justice) and insists on the necessity of performing them

solely for the glory of God. Vanity or pride can readily spoil or sully the best deeds, and in almsgiving, prayer, and fasting the Pharisees indulged their desire for human praise. Ostentation is to be avoided in such good works; they are to be done for God alone, and from Him alone is reward to be sought.

In prayer the repetition of superstitious formulas after the manner of the pagans is condemned. To show them how to pray Jesus gives them the "Our Father," the most beautiful and adequate prayer known to man. The invocation "Our Father Who art in heaven" acknowledges God's goodness to us by which we are encouraged to regard ourselves as His children, and praises His majesty and power. Seven petitions follow, three regarding God Himself and four regarding our own needs. May God be honored and glorified (the name as usual standing for the person); may the kingdom of God on earth, the Church, prosper and spread to all men and so lead to the final consummation of eternal glory; may God's will be carried out on earth with the same perfection and fidelity as it is carried out in heaven by the angels and saints. For ourselves we ask for the food needed to sustain us, for pardon for our sins, for preservation from temptations leading to sin, and for deliverance from all evil, physical and moral, or from the devil who brings such evils upon us. To the petition for pardon is added the acknowledgment that to secure pardon we must on our part pardon those who have offended us, and this includes at least the initial step in the love of enemies prescribed above, since it means the giving up of all resentment against our enemies.

d) *Heavenly treasures*, Matt. 6, 19-34. Purity of intention, seeking the glory of God in all things, has its eternal reward in heaven; this readily suggests a contrast with the rewards offered by earth and with the self-seeking of the avaricious. Earthly goods are perishable, but the merit stored up in heaven endures forever. Attachment to earthly goods drives the love of God from the heart, for the heart is

naturally fixed on what we value most. The illustration drawn from the eye and the body shows the evil effects of avarice, of having the heart attached to worldly things. If the eye is healthy and not impeded in any way, it serves as a light by which all the exterior actions are guided; but if the eye is diseased or hindered, it leaves the body in the dark and exterior action becomes difficult or impossible. The heart is considered as the center of thought and affection; if it is spiritually healthy, our thoughts and affections are fixed upon God and our whole life proceeds orderly, but if it is diseased by undue eagerness for earthly treasures, self-seeking replaces the service of God in our life. Unless utterly depraved, men try to delude themselves into thinking that they can indulge their avarice without ceasing to serve God, but our Lord insists that such double service is impossible, and as an example He uses a servant or slave trying to serve two masters; such a slave will surely fail in his service to one or the other. Mammon means riches and is used as a personification representing riches as an idol; avarice is the service of riches and necessarily excludes the service of God. This service of riches differs from the mere possession of them; a rich man by properly using his wealth shows that he is its master, not its slave. But the attraction of wealth is so strong that it readily gains control, enslaves the heart, and leads to sin.

To escape this danger there should be no solicitude for even the necessities of life, for food or clothing; God is to be trusted to see that we do not want. Having given us life, God will give us also the comparatively small things needed to sustain it. Since He provides for the birds, He will provide for man who is more perfect than they. Our solicitude is useless, for we cannot add a single moment to our life beyond the limit set by God; this thought is presented in the form of a metaphor of measure, life being considered a journey which we cannot extend a cubit (about 18 inches) beyond the fixed destination. The Greek *ἡλικία* may mean

either stature or age (time of life); stature was the meaning given to it here more commonly by earlier commentators, but age is preferable because Christ wishes to say that man cannot do even the smallest thing for himself and it might seem a small thing to add a few minutes to his length of life, while to add a cubit to his height would be something remarkable. Once more, reasoning from the less to the greater, our Lord calls attention to the flowers (lilies or the reddish purple anemones) and concludes that God will be even more careful to clothe His children. His disciples are not to imitate the pagans who are anxious about temporal things because they are ignorant of God's providence. Finally, God knows their needs and, as their Father, He wishes to be good to them. The primary care, then, of the Christian should be to obtain the treasures of the kingdom and to practice its virtues (justice); God will supply his material needs. The future is to be left to Him; he has sufficient to do in bearing the burdens brought by each day. Christ does not forbid prudent forethought nor reasonable exertion for temporal things, but that anxiety which withdraws the attention from spiritual interests and leads to forgetfulness of God.

e) *Rash judgments and prudence*, Matt. 7, 1-6. Kindness in judging others is necessary and its practice is rendered easier by the thought that God will judge us according to our mildness or severity in judging others. This regards individuals as such and does not condemn the just severity sometimes required by one's official position; it is aimed particularly at those who neglect their own faults and severely denounce the smaller faults of others, since this is nothing less than hypocrisy.

Prudence is to be used in the administration of holy things. This might be connected with the preceding as marking a limit beyond which kind judgment is not to go, but it more probably concerns those intrusted with distributing holy things. For the Jews such holy things would be the loaves of



proposition or the sacrificial foods; it would be a profanation to give these to dogs, held in abhorrence by the Jews as unclean animals. Pearls represent anything holy; it would be folly to throw them before swine, incapable of appreciating their value. In the kingdom those intrusted with preaching and sacred rites are not to expose these truths and rites to the misuse and derision of men not properly disposed for them.

f) *The power of prayer*, Matt. 7, 7-11. Prayer will not go unanswered; this is founded on the goodness of God, for He is our Father and, if a human father, despite his natural inclination to evil, gives his children what they ask for, surely our heavenly Father will hear our petitions. This is said of prayers offered with a pure intention and for things really useful; when prayer is unheard, it is due to our bad disposition, our lack of perseverance, or our asking for what would prove hurtful to us.

g) *The golden rule*, Matt. 7, 12. As we would like to have others do good to us, so we should do good to them. This is the real spirit of the Law and the prophets.

h) *The spirit of sacrifice*, Matt. 7, 13-14. The broad, easy way of pleasures is trodden by many, but the way leading to eternal life can be followed only at the cost of sacrifice and few tread it. A gate is represented as terminating the journey, and in each case it resembles the road, being wide in the first and narrow in the second. In St. Matthew the narrowness of the gate (or the road) makes it hard to find, while in St. Luke 13, 24, the image is rather that of a man unable to pass through a gate because of its narrowness.

i) *Against false prophets*, Matt. 7, 15-20. Some will pretend to be sheep of Christ's fold, but in reality they will be wolves, seeking their own interests and destroying the true sheep under an appearance of zeal for religion. They can be discovered through their deeds, as a tree is judged by its fruit; the figure of the tree recurs in Matt. 12, 33-35 and Luke 6, 43-45.

j) *Against illusions*, Matt. 7, 21-23. Words and deeds, however holy or miraculous in appearance, will not suffice unless they are accompanied by the sincere carrying out of the will of the Father; a Christian must regulate his life according to the principles he professes (cf. Luke 6, 43; 13, 26.27).

k) *Final exhortation*, Matt. 7, 24-27. Faith must show itself in good works; the man reducing Christ's words to practice stands as firmly as a house built on the solid rock, but he who does not live his religion will end in disaster just as a house built on sand will fall when the rain washes away its foundation.

125. *Teaching in parables*. The people of the East are fond of presenting their ideas in the form of comparisons or examples rather than in abstract statements. In using parables our Lord was simply following the natural inclination of the people.

A. **The name.** The Hebrew name for parable is *mashal*. It means a comparison, sometimes a proverb. The Greek name is *παραβολή*, meaning in the classics a comparison; it is derived from the verb *παραβάλλω*, to place one thing alongside another, to compare; *προιμία*, proverb, is used by St. John in the sense of parable. The Latin names used are *parabola* and *similitudo*, the latter occurring eight times in St. Luke.

B. **Definition.** In the Gospels a parable is an independent discourse presenting a supernatural truth by comparing it with something in the natural order.

Hence, there are four elements:

1. A certain completeness and independence in the discourse; this excludes incidental similes such as "I saw Satan like lightning falling from Heaven" (Luke 10, 18).

2. The supernatural truth illustrated.

3. The natural fact illustrating this truth.

4. A comparison between 2 and 3.

A parable differs from a fable, for the fable illustrates only

natural truths while the parable deals with supernatural truths; besides, the fable introduces persons and things in an arbitrary and purely imaginary way, e.g., animals speaking, but the parable keeps to the real nature of things.

A parable differs from a myth, for the myth is built up in such a way as to have a fictitious narrative accepted as true and historical, while the parable is frankly fiction.

A parable differs from an allegory as a simile differs from a metaphor, for the parable is an extended simile, and the allegory an extended metaphor identifying the truth illustrated with the thing illustrating it. Still the two are sometimes mingled in the Gospels.

The foundation for such figures of speech as the parable is had in the intimate and wonderful likeness existing between the natural and the supernatural order. Like a skillful teacher, our Lord leads men from the known to the unknown, from the truths made familiar by daily experience and natural aptitude up to the supernatural truths beyond. "The way through precepts is long, through examples it is short and effective" (Seneca, Ep. 6).

*The number of the parables.* Scholars are not agreed on the number of parables found in the Gospels since many of the illustrations used are subject to dispute because of their close resemblance to either similes or allegories. The numbers given range from 27 to 100; Pope gives 55, Fonck, 72, Fillian, about 30.

**C. The purpose of the parables.** In itself a parable is intended to make a truth easier to grasp, and our Lord generally used parables for this purpose. Sometimes, however, He proposed them with an intentional obscurity; this is especially true of the parables of this third period of the public life which were spoken to the crowds assembled along the shores of the Lake of Genesareth and hence are often called the "Parables of the Lake." Christ Himself says that these parables were used to hide His teaching (Mark 4, 10-12; Luke 8, 9-10; Matt. 13, 10-17).

Two theories have been advanced to explain His reason for speaking obscurely: First, the theory of punishment, which holds that this intentional obscurity was to punish the people for their lack of faith. Second, the theory of mercy, which explains this intentional obscurity as a plan to put the people in possession of that part of the truth which they were then capable of understanding and in this way to arouse them to seek the higher meaning which at first, because of their lack of faith, they were simply incapable of grasping.

The true explanation seems to lie in a combination of these two theories. The different classes of hearers must be distinguished.

*a)* For the disciples and all well-disposed persons these parables were a means of instruction, for they taught them part of the truth and put them in a position to inquire after further explanation and to profit by it.

*b)* For the hostile scribes and Pharisees they were a means of veiling Christ's doctrine to avoid useless conflict or irritation. Punishment is here prominent, yet there is an element of mercy for even such persons, by being humbled and by having their interest aroused, might be led to further inquiry.

*c)* For those in the crowd who were merely indifferent, through laziness or mild prejudice, the parables were partial revelations of the truth adapted to their limited power of understanding (cf. Mark 4, 33, "according as they were able to hear"); so for them they were works of mercy, giving them a new chance to correct their bad disposition.

*d)* For those in the crowd who were really ill-disposed because of their strong attachment to vainglory or material things, the parables were a means of punishment, just as in the case of the Pharisees; the effect was that they were blinded, that they did not understand.

Hence, the element of mercy holds for the disciples, for

all the well-disposed, and for the merely indifferent, though for these last punishment figures in a secondary way. The element of punishment holds for the scribes and Pharisees and for all of positively bad disposition; yet here, too, mercy plays a part insofar as they might be humbled or have their curiosity awakened.

Did Jesus conceal any truth which those of evil disposition would have been able to understand if it had been clearly proposed? Yes, if by "to understand" is meant "to get the meaning of"; no, if by "to understand" is meant "to receive, to accept." He did conceal truths which, if plainly expressed, would have excited in them feelings of repugnance or hatred. It was their bad disposition that exposed them to the danger of having these feelings excited by unwelcome spiritual enlightenment. Hence, in this way the obscurity was a punishment for their sin.

Note how St. John records the failure of our Lord's enemies to understand even the miracles (12, 37-41).

**126. *Rules for interpreting the parables.***

1. *The image.* Try to understand the image clearly, e.g., the sowing, the field. It will stand out more vividly, the better you are acquainted with the times and the country where the parable was spoken, for the prevalent ideas, manners, and customs all throw light on the meaning.

2. *The supernatural truth.* In the parables this is some aspect of the kingdom of God. Determine that aspect as definitely as possible.

3. *The comparison between the image and the truth.* See clearly the precise element of comparison, the point in which these two are said to be alike. Avoid two extremes: it is not necessary that everything in the parable should have something corresponding to it in the truth illustrated (this was the mistake of former times); nor are all circumstances to be disregarded as mere ornaments (this is the mistake of the moderns). In the parable of the sower, Christ explains

the various details (birds, thorns, road) as illustrating various elements of the truth He is teaching. Hence, the fundamental idea will be one, but this idea is usually expanded in the different details of the parable.

The example of the early Fathers of the Church justifies the accommodation of a parable to other truths besides the one directly intended by our Lord, but only for illustration or edification and not for strict proof.

### 127. *The parables of the third period.*

**A. The sower and the seed,** Mark 4, 1-9; Luke 8, 4-8; Matt. 13, 1-9. The explanation of this parable is given in Mark 4, 10-20; Luke 8, 9-15; Matt. 13, 10-23.

*a) The image.* Seed was sown by hand. Except in a few sections of Palestine, the fields were rather poor, on hillsides or in narrow valleys, with scanty soil. The natives were not noted for diligence, and so there was often an abundance of weeds and stones in the field. The road mentioned need not be a highway, but rather a path across the field.

*b) The supernatural truth.* The effectiveness of the word of God depends on the dispositions of the hearers.

*c) The point of comparison.* As the fruitfulness of the seed depends on the nature of the soil, so the success of the word depends on the disposition of the hearers.

*d) Details:* Seed falling on hard, trodden ground lies there till eaten by the birds; the word preached to cold, indifferent, or inattentive hearers fails to make an impression and the devil easily leads them to other thoughts and desires.

Seed falling on stony, scanty soil sprouts quickly only to be soon dried up by the sun; the word preached to superficial, frivolous, or inconstant hearers arouses their interest or enthusiasm, but temptation makes them soon forget it.

Seed falling among thorns is choked by the thorns; the word preached to those strongly attached to the world is suffocated by their passions.

Seed falling on good ground is fruitful; the word

preached to the well-disposed is received, reflected upon, and reduced to practice.

**B. The seed growing,** Mark 4, 26-29.

a) *The image.* In Palestine little care is bestowed on the fields; the seed once planted is left to itself till the harvest.

b) *The supernatural truth.* The kingdom of God grows continually through its own internal power.

c) *The point of comparison.* As the seed has in itself the power to develop, so has the word through the grace of God.

Christ, the sower, has withdrawn His visible presence to await the time of judgment. This withdrawing is not to be pressed, still less can it be an excuse for inactivity on the part either of preachers or of hearers.

**C. The cockle and the wheat,** Matt. 13, 24-30. The explanation is given in Matt. 13, 36-43.

a) *The image.* Cockle is darnel, a common weed (*Lolium temulentum*). In the East, examples of this method of taking revenge are not unusual. The wheat and cockle grow up together with their roots entangled; it is easier to separate them at the harvest.

b) *The supernatural truth.* God's providence permits evil men to be found among the good till the judgment.

c) *The point of comparison.* As the cockle is not separated till the harvest, so God does not destroy the wicked at once, but lets them continue till the judgment.

d) *Details:* The sower of the seed is Christ Who established the kingdom of God; the field is the world, men; the good seed are the children of the kingdom, good men; the cockle are evil men in whose hearts the devil (the enemy of the kingdom) has planted thoughts and sentiments contrary to the Church. God allows the wicked to grow in order to give them a chance to repent, or in order to try the just, for, as St. Ambrose says, if there were no persecutions, there would be no martyrs, or in order to show His patience

and His justice when at last He punishes them eternally. The eagerness of the servants to root out the cockle at once represents the imprudent zeal which seeks to stamp out every nascent evil. The parable is concerned only with God's general providence in permitting evils in the world; it contains nothing against the Church's duty to suppress scandals, etc. The harvest stands for the final judgment when men receive either eternal glory or eternal punishment according to their works.

**D. The grain of mustard seed**, Mark 4, 30-32; Luke 13, 18.19; Matt. 13, 31.32.

a) *The image*. The mustard seed is the smallest of the seeds planted in Palestine at this time; there and in the warmer parts of Europe it grows to a height of ten or twelve feet.

b) *The supernatural truth*. The Church attains to a wonderful (world-wide) extent from a very insignificant beginning.

c) *The point of comparison*. As the small seed grows till it becomes a tree, so the Church develops from a small beginning. This corrects the current opinion that the kingdom would come with a striking display of power and splendor.

**E. The leaven**, Luke 13, 20.21; Matt. 13, 33.

a) *The image*. In making bread, something, like our yeast, must be used to lighten the dough and give it taste. A measure was about one third of a bushel.

b) *The supernatural truth*. The Gospel has the power to change men interiorly.

c) *The point of comparison*. As heavy dough is made light and savory by leaven, so souls are freed from the heaviness of sin by the Gospel and given a taste for heavenly things.

**F. The treasure and the pearl**, Matt. 13, 44-46.

a) *The images*. In an age when banks, etc., were lacking or hard to reach, money and other valuables were often



buried in fields for security. Treasure trove in Palestine belonged to the owner of the property where it was found.

b) *The supernatural truth.* The kingdom is something of great value.

c) *The points of comparison.* As men make every effort to obtain treasures or precious pearls, so they must exert themselves for the kingdom. Some find it unexpectedly, some must seek it; but all must strive to possess it.

**G. The net,** Matt. 13, 47-50.

a) *The image.* On the Lake of Genesareth fishing was usually carried on by means of nets.

b) *The supernatural truth.* All men, good and bad, may be in the kingdom (the Church), but the final judgment will determine their different fates.

c) *The point of comparison.* As the net is dragged in with all sorts of fish and its contents separated only later, so the Church includes good and bad till the judgment.

**H. The householder,** Matt. 13, 52.

a) *The image.* The owner of a household or estate has many possessions which he makes use of according to his needs.

b) *The supernatural truth.* Those who preach the word must have a wealth of knowledge for various occasions.

c) *The point of comparison.* As the householder draws upon his possessions for whatever is needed at the moment, so the teacher adapts his lessons to the circumstances, needs, and understanding of his hearers.

**128. The miracles of the third period.**

**A. General expressions.** The Evangelists frequently refer to miracles without giving particulars. "He healed many, so that they pressed upon Him for to touch Him, as many as had evils. And the unclean spirits, when they saw Him, fell down before Him" (Mark 3, 10.11). "(A very great multitude of people) who were come to hear Him, and to be healed of their diseases. And they that were troubled with unclean spirits, were cured. And all the multi-

tude sought to touch Him, for virtue went out from Him, and healed all" (Luke 6, 17-19). Cf. also Mark 6, 1-7.13; Luke 7, 21.22; 9, 11; John 5, 36; 6, 2.

### B. Detailed descriptions:

	John	Mark	Luke	Matt.
Paralytic at Bethsaida..	5, 1-9			
Man with withered hand .....		3, 1-6	6, 6-11	12, 9-14
Servant of the centurion .....			7, 1-10	8, 5-13
Son of the widow of Naim .....			7, 11-17	
Blind and dumb demoniac .....			(11, 14)	12, 22
Tempest calmed .....		4, 35-40	8, 22-25	8, 23-27
Two possessed of Gergesa .....		5, 1-20	8, 26-39	8, 28-34
Woman with issue of blood .....		5, 24-34	8, 43-48	9, 20-22
Daughter of Jairus .....		5, 24-34	8, 43-48	9, 20-22
Two blind men .....				9, 27-31
Dumb demoniac .....			(11, 14)	9, 32-34
Multiplication of loaves	6, 1-15	6, 30-44	9, 10-17	14, 13-21
Walking on the water.	6, 16-21	6, 45-52		14, 22-33

Of these thirteen miracles, one is found in St. John alone, one in St. Luke alone, three in St. Matthew alone, and one in St. Luke and St. Matthew. The other seven are in each of the three Synoptics, while St. John has only two of them.

### 129. *The opposition in the third period.*

A. **In Judea** the hostility is open and violent. The accusations against Him are that He violates the Sabbath and claims to be God; resentment mounts so high that His life is in danger (John 5, 10-18).

B. **In Galilee** the opposition, though strong, is restrained by His great popularity. Here too, the Pharisees accuse Him of violations of the Sabbath and in their anger conspire with the Herodians (the supporters of the government) to kill Him (Mark 3, 6; Luke 6, 1 ff.). To avoid open conflict with

them, Jesus retires for a while (Mark 3, 7). The anointing of His feet by the sinful woman raises another storm of criticism (Luke 7, 39).

Scribes from Jerusalem, unable to deny His miracles or to refute His justification of His conduct, resort to the accusation that He casts out devils by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of devils. But Jesus unmasks their malice by replying that Satan would not fight against himself and that the sin against the Holy Ghost, i.e., willful and persistent unbelief, will not be forgiven (Mark 3, 22-30).

The people of Gergesa on the eastern shore of the lake, ask Him to depart from the country (Mark 5, 17). They were terrified by this manifestation of supernatural power and afraid lest they should suffer some loss even more serious than that of the swine.

At Nazareth the people are scandalized and refuse to believe; they try to kill Him (Mark 6, 1-6; Luke 4, 16-30).

When Herod's curiosity is aroused by news of the miracles, Jesus withdraws into a desert place with His disciples (Luke 9, 7-10).

But the multitude follow Him in such numbers that His relatives are alarmed and begin to think He is mad (Mark 3, 21). After the miracles of the loaves Jesus withdraws from the crowd, because the enthusiasm is running so high that they wish to make Him king (John 6, 15).

# Chapter XX

## THE PUBLIC LIFE OF CHRIST

### IV. Period of Conflict

130. This period extends from March, A.D. 28, to April, A.D. 29.

A. *Sources:* John 6, 22-12, 11; Mark 6, 53-10, 52; 14, 3-9; Luke 9, 18-19, 28; Matt. 8, 18-22; 11, 20-30; 12, 38-45; 14, 34-20, 34; 26, 6-13.

B. *Events:*

	John	Mark	Luke	Matt.
(1)				
Cures in Genesareth...		6, 53-56		14, 34-36
Sermon on the Eucharist	6, 22-72			
Third Pasch .....	7, 1 (6,4)			
Traditions of Pharisees.		7, 1-23		15, 1-20
Near Tyre, daughter of Syrophenician cured.		7, 24-30		15, 21-28
In Decapolis, deaf-mute cured .....		7, 31-37		
Second multiplication of loaves .....		8, 1-10		15, 29-39
A sign from heaven; the leaven of the Pharisees .....		8, 11-21		16, 1-12
Blind man of Bethsaida cured .....		8, 22-26		
Confession of Peter....		8, 27-30	9, 18-21	16, 13-20
First prediction of the Passion .....		8, 31-39	9, 22-27	16, 21-28
The Transfiguration...		9, 1-12	9, 28-36	17, 1-13
Lunatic child cured ...		9, 13-28	9, 37-43	17, 14-20
Second prediction of the Passion .....		9, 29-31	9, 44-45	17, 21-22

	John	Mark	Luke	Matt.
The Temple tax .....				17, 23-26
Instruction of the disciples .....		9, 32-49	9, 46-50	18, 1-35
(2)				
Jesus leaves Galilee for the Feast of the Tabernacles .....	7, 2-10			
Samaritans hostile .....			9, 51-56	
Following Jesus .....			9, 57-62	8, 18-22
The 72 disciples; cities of Galilee condemned	1		10, 1-24	11, 20-30
Parable of Good Samaritan .....			10, 25-37	
Visit to Martha and Mary .....			10, 38-42	
Teaching in the Temple at Tabernacles .....	7, 11-53			
Woman accused of adultery .....	8, 1-11			
The Son of God .....	8, 12-59			
Cure of man born blind	9, 1-41			
The Good Shepherd...	10, 1-21			
Prayer .....			11, 1-13	
Keeping Jesus' word...			11, 27-28	
The sign of Jonas .....			11, 29-36	12, 38-45
Pharisees rebuked .....			11, 37-54	
(3)				
In Jerusalem for the Dedication .....	10, 22-39			
In Perea .....	10, 40-42			
Hypocrisy and covetous- ness .....			12, 1-34	
All must watch .....			12, 35-53	
Signs of the times .....			12, 54-59	
Penance necessary .....			13, 1-5	
Parable of barren fig tree .....			13, 6-9	
Cure of woman infirm for 18 years .....			13, 10-17	
Number of the elect; Herod hostile .....			13, 23-33	

	John	Mark	Luke	Matt.
Blindness of Jerusalem.			13, 34-35	
Dropsical man cured...			14, 1-15	
Parable of the Supper			14, 16-24	
Self-denial .....			14, 25-35	
Parables on mercy.....			15, 1-32	
Parable of Unjust Steward .....			16, 1-13	
Hypocrisy of Pharisees.			16, 14-18	
Parable of Rich Man and Lazarus .....			16, 19-31	
Various virtues .....			17, 1-10	
Raising of Lazarus....	11, 1-53			
To Ephrem .....	11, 54-56			
Toward Jerusalem for the last Pasch.....		10, 1	17, 11	19, 1-2
Ten lepers cured.....			17, 12-19	
The coming of Christ..			17, 20-37	
Parable of the Importu- nate Widow.....			18, 1-8	
Parable of Pharisee and Publican .....			18, 9-14	
Matrimony is indis- soluble .....		10, 2-12	( 16, 18 )	19, 3-12
Children blessed .....		10, 13-16	18, 15-17	19, 13-15
The rich young man..		10, 17-31	18, 18-30	19, 16-30
Parable of Laborers in the Vineyard .....				20, 1-16
Third prediction of the Passion .....		10, 32-34	18, 31-34	20, 17-19
Ambition of the sons of Zebedee .....		10, 35-45		20, 20-28
Blind men of Jericho cured .....		10, 46-52	18, 35-43	20, 29-34
Zachæus entertains Christ .....			19, 1-10	
Parable of the Pounds..			19, 11-28	
The supper at Bethany.	12, 1-11	14, 3-9		26, 6-13

**C. Summary.** The enthusiastic outburst following the multiplication of loaves quickly dies out when the next day in the synagogue of Capharnaum Jesus declares that He is

the Bread of Life and that His body is food and His blood, drink. Many even of His disciples desert Him, but the twelve Apostles stand firm (John 6, 22-72).

With Judea hostile, Herod threatening, and Galilee wavering, Jesus clearly defines His position and separates His disciples from the rest of the Jews. His Church is now set up in opposition to the old. He severely denounces the doctrines of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 15, 1 ff.), takes His disciples off into the pagan countries to the north and east of Galilee, and henceforth devotes Himself in a special way to instructing them.

He leads them first to an open profession of faith in Himself as the Messiah and the Son of God (Matt. 16, 13 ff.). This is the great triumph of His ministry, the climax of the public life. Their faith once firmly established, He must merely build on that foundation, revealing to them the deeper truths of His doctrine and training them in the virtues of their vocation.

Now, for the first time, He plainly foretells His passion and insists on the necessity of the cross for all. This is the great requisite in the kingdom of heaven where God must reign supreme in the hearts of men and they must seek first and last to do only what is pleasing to Him. This means fighting against the evil inclinations of nature and the enticements of the world, and in this is found the daily bearing of the cross for all. Such teaching is too contrary to their customary ideas for them to understand it. To strengthen their faith Jesus is transfigured in glory before the chief Apostles (Matt. 17, 1 ff.), and the passion is again predicted.

In September Jesus journeys to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Tabernacles and is there forced to repel numerous attacks from His enemies (John 7, 2-10, 21). He returns to bid farewell to Galilee, pronouncing the condemnation of the cities of the Lake for their unbelief (Luke 10, 12-15).

Sending 72 of His disciples ahead to prepare the way, He

passes through Perea, the country east of the Jordan, instructing the people, but giving His chief attention to the training of the disciples (Luke 10, 1-11; Matt. 18, 1-35).

In Jerusalem at the Feast of the Dedication, in December, He again rebukes the Jewish authorities, and their hostility breaks out into open violence (John 10, 22-39). He then retires to Perea (John 10, 40-42; Luke 12, 1-17, 10).

He returns to Bethany to raise Lazarus from the dead. This miracle adds greatly to His popularity and enrages the leaders who again plan to put Him to death. He withdraws to Ephrem, north of Judea (John 11, 1-54). Then He passes for the last time through Perea toward Jerusalem (Mark 10, 1-52; Luke 17, 11-19, 28; Matt. 19, 1-20, 34).

Shortly before the Pasch He goes to Bethany (Mark 14, 3-9; Matt. 26, 6-13; John 11, 55-12, 11).

**D. Features.** The disciples are completely separated from the people and given special training. The conflicts with the Jews are frequent and severe. With the final collision near and inevitable, Jesus advances resolutely to meet the last attack. He has revealed His divinity more and more explicitly and proved His claims by His works. His disciples have been organized, firmly established in faith, and well instructed. He is the center of public attention; people and leaders are divided in His regard, but the party of opposition is determined to crush Him.

### 131. *Teaching during the fourth period.*

**A. The discourse on the Holy Eucharist,** John 6, 22-72. After the multiplication of loaves, Jesus prevented the people from proclaiming Him king by sending off His disciples in a boat and by retiring Himself to the solitude of the mountain. The crowd saw the disciples rowing away without Jesus and noted that theirs was the only boat there. Consequently, when the people themselves crossed the lake the next morning in boats that had arrived in the meantime (or perhaps they walked along the shore) and later



found our Lord in Capharnaum with the disciples, they were astonished and asked how He had come across the lake, for they had not seen the miracle of His walking on the water. Ignoring their question, He reproaches them for lack of faith and attributes their eagerness in following Him to their having been given food in the desert. He exhorts them to seek not perishable bread but that which endures to life everlasting. This enduring bread is Christ Himself with all the blessings He brings, and chief among them the Holy Eucharist. Faith in Him, then, must come first; they should believe, for the Father has put the seal of His approbation on Him (through His miracles, the Scriptures, etc.).

Thinking that this eternal life is to be won by some special form of good deeds, the Jews ask what work they are to do that will be pleasing to God. Jesus repeats His demand for faith; the work pleasing to God is belief in Him Whom God has sent. They show how far they are from such faith by demanding that like Moses He should give them manna from heaven. Jesus replies that the bread He gives is immeasurably superior to that manna; for (1) His is the true bread from heaven of which the manna was only a figure, (2) His bread imparts everlasting life, and (3) it imparts it not to the Jews only but to all the world. They ask for this bread, but still with the idea that it is material food.

Jesus now (35-47) announces that He Himself is the true bread, the bread of life, itself living and giving life. But it is for those who believe; the Father calls men, by faith they accept Christ, and He does the will of the Father in giving them eternal life. The Jews object to His saying He has come down from heaven, for they know His earthly origin. This is merely another proof of their unbelief (36.44.45); grace has been offered them, but they are not willing to listen to God. It is not a question of seeing God directly,

for Christ Himself alone has seen God; but it is a question of faith (46). By believing in Christ man has eternal life (47).

Having spoken of Himself as the heavenly food to be eaten through faith, Jesus now speaks directly of the Holy Eucharist (48-59); the heavenly food which He will give is His flesh. This statement startles the Jews into exclaiming, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" Jesus insists on the necessity of eating this bread; unless a man eat His flesh and drink His blood, he cannot have eternal life, for His flesh is truly meat (food) and His blood is truly drink, since they truly nourish the soul and give eternal life. In Holy Communion man is truly in Jesus and Jesus truly in him, and through grace Jesus communicates to him a participation in divine life. This sublime doctrine is brought to a close by a repetition of the comparison with the manna; supernatural immortality is conferred by this heavenly food while the manna simply sustained the body for a while.

The effect of these words on the crowd is not stated but their rejection of the doctrine is evident from the refusal of many of the disciples to believe. Knowing the thoughts of these disciples, Jesus refers to His future ascension and in this way strives to awaken their faith, for if He can carry His body up to heaven, that should induce men to believe that He can make that body food for men (or, according to some, "If you now refuse to believe though I am still with you, how will you believe after I leave you?"). What He has said of His body and blood being food and drink is literally and really true; it must not, however, be taken in a gross materialistic sense as though men were to eat Him in cannibalistic fashion, for the eating of flesh deprived of life can profit nothing for supernatural life (or His words can be understood only by minds illuminated by grace; mere human reason cannot comprehend them). But He will give them His flesh to eat in a manner not yet explained, in which it will profit for supernatural life since it will be

flesh united not merely to the vivifying spirit but also to the Divine Word.

There is a mystery here and so faith alone can accept it. Many of the disciples lack this faith, for they had been following Him rather out of vague curiosity or in the hope of temporal gain. These now leave Him, and Jesus asks the Apostles what they will do; His question is not asked in doubt but to strengthen their faith by giving them a chance to state it explicitly. In the name of all Peter professes his faith in Christ's divinity and in all that He teaches. Yet Jesus warns them that one of them is to prove unfaithful; from this it seems probable that Judas was even then wavering.

**B. The Feast of the Tabernacles at Jerusalem,** John 7, 1-39. This feast was celebrated with great solemnity for seven days in the month of Tisri (September-October). During these days the people lived in tents (Latin *tabernaculum*, a tent) adorned with branches or in leafy bowers to commemorate the life of their forefathers during the forty years of wandering in the desert. The Day of Expiation, when all the sins of the nation were considered to have been atoned for, had already been celebrated, and the harvest was over, so that this was a season of general rejoicing, a sort of carnival, and often even of license.

Jesus goes to the feast quietly, wishing to avoid attracting attention at His arrival. About the middle of the seven days He begins to teach in the courts surrounding the Temple. His doctrine is divine and will be recognized as such by all not blinded by passion or prejudice; He has no reason for deceiving since He seeks only the glory of God (7, 16-19). Among the rites of this feast was the bringing of water from the near-by pool of Siloe. Each day one of the priests, chosen by lot, went to the pool accompanied by musicians and choir and filled a golden pitcher with water; on his return to the Temple, he poured the water on the corner of the altar amid chants and shouts of joy. This rite

was in memory of the water given miraculously in the desert. This furnished occasion for Jesus to proclaim that He is the source of the true water of life; he who believes in Him has an abundance of grace which is sufficient not merely for himself but also for others whom he helps; "out of his belly" means from his heart or soul, the source of spiritual activity (7, 37-39).

**C. After the Feast of the Tabernacles, John 8, 1-10, 18.** Another feature of this feast was the illumination of the Court of the Gentiles in memory of the pillar of fire in the desert. It was a striking spectacle since, owing to the elevation of the Temple area, the light could be seen far and wide. In reference to this Jesus announces that He is the true light of the world; His testimony is true, for He is God and the Father is with Him (8, 12-19). He does nothing of Himself, but only with the Father; hence, He and the Father are of the same nature (8, 26-29). The truth which He brings frees men from the slavery of sin, and those who keep His word will live forever; before Abraham was born, He was in existence and hence He is eternal God (8, 31-59).

Physical evils are not always the result of sin (9, 1-3); Jesus must do the works of the Father during His mortal life; He is always the light of the world, but it is only during the few years of His life on earth that He will be visibly present among men (9, 4-5). He is the Son of God (9, 35-38). By not believing in Him His enemies show that they are willfully and sinfully blind (9, 39-41).

In a series of illustrations drawn from the shepherd's life, Jesus develops the doctrine that He is the way of salvation, the guide, the guardian, and Savior of men (10, 1-18). He is the door of the sheepfold; all must enter through Him. He is the shepherd and His own sheep recognize His voice and follow Him, and He gives them life. He is the good shepherd Who defends His sheep with His life, while the hireling flees at the approach of danger and abandons the sheep to be devoured or scattered by the wolves. He is divine,

for He knows the Father as the Father knows Him. His sheep are found not only among the Jews but among the Gentiles also; He must bring them all into the sheepfold, for there can be only one fold and one shepherd (this is said of the spread of the Church and does not imply, as is often supposed, that all men will some day be members of Christ's fold). He lays down His life not because forced to do so by human violence, but in willing obedience to His Father's command.

**D. Warning against the Pharisees,** Mark 8, 13-21; Matt. 16, 5-12. Now that the conflict has become open, our Lord expressly warns the disciples to be on their guard against the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees. How much the disciples were still under their influence may be gathered from Matt. 15, 12, where the disciples are alarmed because our Lord's teaching on external defilement has scandalized the Pharisees.

**E. The profession of faith,** Mark 8, 27-30; Luke 9, 18-21; Matt. 16, 13-20. The people had been making various conjectures about Jesus; the disciples are aware of this, but their own faith in Him is definite and Peter now voices it, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." They believe that He is the Messiah and, more than that, the Son of God. It is evident that this means faith in the divinity of Jesus; on no lesser supposition can the following words of Jesus be explained, for He attributes Peter's knowledge to divine revelation, but if Peter merely acknowledged Him as the Messiah, such revelation would not have been needed since our Lord had so strikingly proved His Messiahship by His miracles.

As a reward to Peter for his profession of faith, Christ promises that he will be the rock upon which He will build His Church which is to stand forever against all the attacks of evil, or which will be stronger than death, i.e., will endure forever. Moreover, Peter will be intrusted with supreme power, symbolized by the keys, in binding and

loosing, in declaring what is to be believed and what is to be done, i.e., in matters of faith and morals. This is the promise of the Primacy to Peter.

**F. The prediction of the Passion**, Mark 8, 31-33; Luke 9, 22; Matt. 16, 21-23. As the disciples were now prepared somewhat by this strengthening of their faith through Peter's explicit declaration of it, Jesus considers it opportune to reveal to them the mystery of His approaching passion. Peter protests against such a possibility, and our Lord rebukes him ("Satan" means merely "adversary," which is its primary meaning), as one trying to interfere with the divine will; he does not understand God's plan for the redemption of the world, but manifests a merely human repugnance to pain and dishonor.

**G. The cross is for all**, Mark 8, 34-39; Luke 9, 23-27; Matt. 16, 24-28. Christ's disciples must deny themselves, fighting against every passion that threatens to usurp God's supreme mastery over the heart; the cross is to be taken up daily in the patient bearing of the ills of life; Christ is to be followed, no matter what the cost. Even though this cost be life itself, this will be the finding of true life, while the avoidance of death through a denial of Christ will mean eternal death. No gain, not even the acquiring of all the wealth in the world, can balance the loss of eternal life, just as it would be profitless for a man to strive for some earthly prize the winning of which must cost him his life. Once lost, eternal life cannot be regained in any way; this does not mean that mortal sin cannot be forgiven, but that once the period of this mortal life has passed, there is no further chance for the sinner to gain eternal happiness.

This is made clear by the immediate reference to the coming of Christ as judge to render to each man according to his works. Judgment will begin even during the lifetime of some of those listening to His voice; various interpretations have been given to this "coming of the Son of Man in His kingdom," the most probable being that it refers to

the destruction of Jerusalem some forty years later or to the general spread of the Church throughout the world. The rationalistic interpretation that it refers to the general judgment, must be rejected, for it holds that Christ erroneously expected the end of the world soon and is directly against our Lord's own words that only the Father knows when that end is to come (Mark 13, 32).

**H. The coming of Elias**, Mark 9, 10-12; Matt. 17, 10-13. After the Transfiguration Jesus admonished the Apostles not to tell what they had seen till after His resurrection from the dead. The passion and resurrection were still too novel to be understood by them, but with the glorious vision fresh in mind they thought that the public proclamation of Christ's earthly kingdom was to take place soon, and so they bring up the question of the coming of Elias. According to Mal. 4, 5, Elias is to reappear on earth before the final judgment, but the current Jewish opinion held that he would appear before the first coming of the Messias. Jesus distinguishes between His first and second comings. Elias will restore all things before Christ comes as judge; but the herald of His first coming was John the Baptist (cf. Matt. 11, 14) who in the spirit of Elias (Luke 1, 17) prepared the people for the Messias and suffered a lot similar to that which Jesus is to suffer.

**I. The temple tribute**, Matt. 17, 23-26. Jesus leads Peter to acknowledge that kings demand tribute not from their own children but from foreigners. The temple tribute was collected for God; Peter had already recognized Christ as the Son of God; hence, he could understand that Christ could not be bound to pay this tribute. Still our Lord pays for Himself and Peter to avoid scandalizing those who did not know His divinity. A didrachma was worth about 32 cents; a stater was double the value of a didrachma and covered the tribute for both Jesus and Peter.

**J. Ambition and scandal**, Mark 9, 32-36; 9, 41-47; Luke 9, 46-48; 17, 1, 2; Matt. 18, 1-10. Still occupied with

worldly ideas and anxious about their position in the kingdom, the disciples ask our Lord who is greater in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus exhorts them to put aside all worldly ambition and to be humble; they must have the simplicity and sincerity of the innocent child. From this thought He makes a transition to the subject of scandal. Though scandals will come on account of men's perverseness, those who give scandal will surely be punished with great severity. Hence, every lawful means must be used to avoid scandal, and every occasion of sin must be avoided even though it involves notable sacrifices.

**K. Conditions of discipleship**, Luke 9, 57-62; Matt. 8, 18-22. To a man who professes his readiness to follow Him, Jesus explains the hardships of His life of poverty; probably this man was expecting to profit in some way by attaching himself to our Lord. Another is willing to follow, but wishes first to attend his father's funeral, while a third desires to say good-by to his relatives; to both Jesus answers that their vocation admits of no delay. The answer seems severe, but must have been required by the circumstances; there was danger of a loss of vocation in the return to their homes, whether this was due to their personal dispositions or to the critical state of public opinion regarding our Lord.

**L. Christ's joy in the faith of His disciples**, Luke 10, 17-24; Matt. 11, 25-30. At the beginning of His ministry in Perea, Jesus sent seventy-two of His disciples ahead to prepare for His arrival, exhorting them at the same time to pray for an adequate number of laborers to gather in the abundant harvest of souls waiting for salvation. When they return joyfully announcing that they had even driven out devils in His name, Jesus justifies their rejoicing by assuring them that in truth Satan had fallen like lightning from his high position; others interpret our Lord's words as a warning against pride, for when Satan had been in glory He had seen him fall to the depths. Still, however legitimate their joy, they should recognize that the only real cause for



rejoicing is in the fact that their names are written in heaven, i.e., that they are destined for eternal happiness.

Then Jesus expresses His own joy and thankfulness that God has willed to reveal the mysteries of salvation not to the worldly-wise but to little ones. He sums up these mysteries as consisting in a correct knowledge of His divinity. Everything has been given to Him by His Father, and hence He is of the same divine nature as the Father. He is adequately known to the Father, and in turn He alone knows the Father adequately and communicates this knowledge to man. It is singular blessing for the disciples that they now see and hear what the just of the Old Law longed for in vain. Then with the utmost tenderness of appeal Jesus invites all men to become His disciples; they have nothing to fear, for He is not harsh but meek and humble, and His law, unlike the Old Law, is one of love and mercy, bringing genuine spiritual joy and peace (Matt. 11, 28-30).

**M. Love of the neighbor**, Luke 10, 25-37. To have eternal life it is sufficient to keep the commandments, and they may be summed up in the love of God and the love of the neighbor. The Parable of the Good Samaritan illustrates the second of these commandments; all men are neighbors and we should help all in need. The Old Law enjoined the love of the neighbor, but the scribes had restricted this to the love of those of their own nation; hence, the Samaritan in the parable is not merely a stranger in the ordinary sense but a foreigner excluded by the common opinion from the privileges of neighborly care, and yet he showed kindness to a Jew. Since our Lord usually chose His illustrations from things at hand, it is very likely that this parable was told on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem, for, it is in this setting that He places the story; besides, the next episode (Luke 10, 38-42) occurs in the home of Martha and Mary at Bethany near Jerusalem. The naturalness of the parable is heightened by the fact that many priests lived in Jericho and that the road from there to Jerusalem ran through a wild, hilly

country infested with robbers who found secure retreats in the surrounding deserts.

**N. Faith in Christ**, Luke 11, 29-36; Matt. 12, 38-45. The unbelief of the people is sinful. The queen of the south traveled far to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and the people of Ninive did penance at the preaching of Jonas, but the Jews refuse to listen to Jesus though He is greater than Solomon and Jonas. It is this lack of faith that makes men blind.

**O. Avoid hypocrisy and fear God alone**, Luke 12, 1-12. The disciples are to be sincere in their service of God; hypocrisy is futile, since in God's own time all things will stand revealed, even the most secret words. Men will persecute them, but they must remain firm in the confession of Him, fearing not those who can injure only the body, but God Who will punish the soul for infidelity, and confiding absolutely in God's love which continually watches over them and will enable them to answer courageously and wisely when they are brought to trial before the powerful ones of earth.

**P. Against avarice**, Luke 12, 13-34. One of the crowd petitions Jesus to force his brother to give him his share in the inheritance that had fallen to them, but Jesus refuses to interfere in such matters, perhaps because the man was avaricious or because He wishes to keep free from interference with the civil courts. In the Parable of the Rich Fool, however, He warns all men against avarice and urges them to lay up treasures with God, trusting to divine providence to provide the necessities of life. This does not mean that men are not to labor for themselves and their dependents, but that they are not to be oversolicitous for material things nor to fix their hearts on them inordinately.

**Q. Vigilance**, Luke 12, 35-53. All men must watch so as to be always ready for the coming of Christ, but especially His chosen disciples, for they will have to give an account in proportion to the special graces bestowed on them. Jesus

Himself is eager for the spread of the fire that He has come to cast upon the earth, eager, too, for the baptism of suffering which He must undergo to establish His kingdom. It is not a life of ease that He promises His followers, but one of labor and sacrifice, since fidelity to Him will bring separation and division of families.

**R. Penance**, Luke 13, 1-9. All men must do penance lest they perish miserably. God in His patience gives time for repentance, but retribution is certain for the impenitent.

**S. The mercy of God**, Luke 15, 1-32. When the scribes and Pharisees murmur against Jesus for His kindly treatment of sinners, He uses three beautiful parables to bring out the truth of God's infinite mercy. It is an argument *a fortiori*; if men are so careful of things or persons dear to them, how much more careful must God be of the souls He loves. A man will leave his 99 sheep to go after the one that has strayed. A woman with 10 groats (Greek drachma δραχμή, one of which was worth about 16 cents) loses one and sweeps the whole house till she finds it. The father of a wayward son awaits his return eagerly and welcomes him back with tenderness and rejoicing.

**T. The danger of riches**, Luke 16, 1-31. The Parable of the Wicked Steward illustrates energy and resourcefulness, but does not praise the methods used by this man to save himself. Riches are dangerous unless used well; no man can serve two masters, and the desire for wealth becomes a master if it is not restrained. When the Pharisees laugh at this doctrine, Jesus tells them their justice is only in the eyes of men, not in the eyes of God; the kingdom is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets, but it is violently opposed; still, the law must reach its full accomplishment. Despite their pretended piety, the Pharisees in reality disdain the law, for they tolerate adultery (an allusion to their failure to protest against Herod's adulterous union). The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus enforces the teaching on the danger of riches.

**U. Brotherly correction and forgiveness,** Luke 17, 3-4; Matt. 18, 15-35. After an offense the offender is first to be corrected privately by the one offended; then, if he is unwilling to listen, by one or two more. This was in accord with the law forbidding the condemnation of an accused person except on the testimony of at least two witnesses (Deut. 17, 6-19, 15). Finally, if he continues obdurate, the authorities of the Church are to be informed that they may administer the necessary correction; this failing of effect, the offender is to be avoided just as the Jews were accustomed to avoid associating with heathens and publicans.

To Peter's question whether it is enough to have forgiven a man seven times, our Lord replies that forgiveness is to know no limit, and in the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant He enforces the twofold lesson that our offenses against God are far greater than any man's can be against us and that God will forgive us only on condition that we forgive those who have offended us (cf. the "Our Father," Matt. 6, 12). In the parable the king punishes the servant for the debt which he had previously remitted; this has no place in the application, for sins once forgiven do not revive.

**V. Prayer,** Luke 18, 1-14. The importance of perseverance in prayer is driven home by the Parable of the Importunate Widow, while the necessity of humility in prayer is illustrated by the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. In the former parable the injustice of the judge in refusing to hear the case in the beginning has no parallel in the application to God; the answer to our prayers is sometimes deferred because God wishes to purify our intention, or to increase our appreciation of the favor asked for, or to try our virtue. In the second parable the self-righteousness of the Pharisee is heightened by his boast that he pays tithes on everything, while the law required payment only on cattle and harvests (cf. Luke 11, 42; Num. 18, 21).

**W. The counsel of poverty,** Mark 10, 17-27; Luke 18, 18-27; Matt. 19, 16-26. The commandments are enough for

salvation, but perfection is had in abandoning all to follow Christ. The sincerity of the young man is placed beyond doubt by St. Mark's statement that Jesus looked upon him with love. He had a genuine desire for perfection, but was unwilling to make the necessary sacrifices. Then Jesus once more comments on the danger of riches; without the special help of God it is as impossible for a rich man to be saved as it is for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. Attempts have been made to soften down the comparison, some substituting a cable for the camel, others suggesting that the eye of a needle was the name of a small gate alongside the ordinary entrance to the city; but there is no foundation for either change. The teaching is unequivocal; riches are a danger and without special graces the rich will inevitably succumb to temptation.

X. **The second coming**, Luke 19, 11-28. To rectify the ideas of the enthusiastic crowd on the near establishment of an earthly kingdom, Jesus presents the Parable of the Ten Pounds (a pound was about \$16). This parable was probably suggested by the sight of the tower of Archelaus at Jericho. Years before, this son of Herod had gone to Rome to have the Roman Senate confer on him the territory left him by his father; the Jews did not want him as a ruler, and so on his return he took bloody revenge on them. The meaning of the parable is: the Jews will soon reject Christ, but will be punished; His disciples must make a good use of His gifts and look for their reward in heaven, i.e., on His return.

132. *The miracles of the fourth period.*

	John	Mark	Luke	Matt.
Demoniac girl . . . . .		7, 24-30		15, 21-28
Deaf-mute in the Decapolis . . . . .		7, 31-37		
Second multiplication of loaves . . . . .		8, 1-10		15, 29-39
Blind man of Bethsaida . . . . .		8, 22-26		
Transfiguration . . . . .		9, 1-12	9, 28-36	17, 1-13
Lunatic child . . . . .		9, 13-28	9, 37-43	17, 14-20

	John	Mark	Luke	Matt.
Stater in the mouth of the fish .....				17, 23-26
Man born blind.....	9, 1-41			
Woman infirm for 18 years .....			13, 10-17	
Dropsical man.....			14, 1-15	
Resurrection of Lazarus	11, 1-53			
Ten lepers.....			17, 12-19	
Two blind men of Jericho .....		10, 46-52	18, 35-43	20, 29-34

Of these thirteen miracles, one is in St. Matthew alone, two in St. Mark alone, three in St. Luke alone, and two in St. John alone; two are common to St. Matthew and St. Mark, while three are common to all the Synoptics. St. John here omits all the miracles recorded by the others.

### 133. *Opposition in the fourth period.*

**A. Denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees,** Mark 7, 1-23; Matt. 15, 1-20. The disciples had been criticized by the scribes and Pharisees for not following the accepted custom of washing the hands before eating. As St. Mark explains, such washings were carried out with the most elaborate care by the Pharisees; countless causes of uncleanness had been invented, and no precaution seemed too much to keep them from defilement.

Jesus turns the accusation against the accusers; while most scrupulous in these matters, they flagrantly violate the law commanding children to honor their parents. For instead of assisting their parents in their need they pretend that what they might give them has already been consecrated to God. Anything consecrated to God was said to be "corban," a gift, and it was not then to be used for the purpose against which it had been pronounced corban. Of course, in refusing to help their parents they were not committing themselves to any obligation to give the thing to God; the sense of their expression then was rather "it would be better for me to give this to God than to you," and so they kept it for

themselves. The Greek text is literally: "whatever of mine might help you, is a gift consecrated to God." In this way they evaded the obligation of honoring their parents, and after such an open violation of the law it was pure hypocrisy for them to pretend to zeal for the law.

Taking up the direct charge made against the disciples, Jesus teaches that real defilement comes not from these indifferent external things but from the malice of the heart.

Like the rest of the people, the disciples are still under the spell of the Pharisees, and so Jesus speaks of them severely as blind and leaders of the blind; they have not been planted by God, for theirs are only traditions invented by men; hence, God will root them up.

**B. At the Feast of Tabernacles, John 7, 11-53.** The sentiments now entertained concerning our Lord come out openly at this feast. Of the crowd, some praise Him, others call Him a seducer of the people, while all fear to speak publicly of Him lest they incur the wrath of the hostile leaders (7, 11-13). Exception is taken to His teaching without having studied in the regular schools. But Jesus teaches the doctrine of the Heavenly Father Who has sent Him; this doctrine will be recognized by those who keep the divine commandments and so free themselves from blinding passions. Sent by God, Jesus seeks only the glory of God; hence, there is no deceitfulness in His teaching as there might be in that one seeking his own glory by offering doctrines of his own invention (7, 14-18).

Then with reference to their repeated objection that He has violated the Sabbath, He turns the accusation against them; by planning His death they violate the prohibition against murder. They pretend to be innocent of such designs, or perhaps the profession of ignorance of the plans already adopted by the Pharisees comes from some in the crowd who really did not know of them (7, 19-20).

Returning to the question of the Sabbath, He compares His healing with their practice of circumcising on that day;

if one is permitted, certainly the other must be. If by circumcision it is allowed to remove what was looked upon as a physical defect in a man, surely it is allowed to heal a man completely. His healing on the Sabbath, like their circumcising, is according to the spirit of the law even though it is against the mere letter (7, 21-24).

When the crowd sees Jesus boldly confronting and refuting the leaders, some begin to wonder whether the rulers have not changed their opinion about Him. Others, however, revert to the old objection that the origin of the Messiah would be mysterious, while they all knew that Jesus was from Nazareth. It was a widely accepted opinion among the rabbis that after being born secretly at Bethlehem the Messiah would manifest Himself at the appointed time in some marvelous manner as one descending from the skies. But in reality they do not know the origin of Jesus except as man; for He has another, a heavenly origin of which they are ignorant. They do not know God as His Father nor as the One Who has sent Him; but Jesus knows Him as such, for He is from God (7, 25-29).

Forced into action by these plain statements in which Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, the Pharisees try to arrest Him. But no one dares to lay hands on Him because His hour is not yet come and because the crowd has grown so enthusiastic over His miracles that they are inclined to believe that He is in truth the Messiah. This enthusiasm spurs the Pharisees to fresh efforts to seize Him, but our Lord awes them with the assurance that He is to be among them for a while yet and then He will go whither they cannot follow, even though they wish. He refers to His passion which will come at the appointed time and not before; after that the majority of the Jews will continue in their unbelief and impenitence, seeking vainly for a savior, or perhaps this has special reference to their following after false Christs in the future or to their despair at the time of the siege of Jerusalem. His words are obscure to the Jews;



they merely wonder whether He intends to leave Palestine and carry His doctrine among the pagan nations (7, 30-36).

When Jesus asserts that He is the true water of life, the crowd is again divided, some seeing in Him a prophet or even the Christ, others objecting that the Messiah must be of the seed and city of David (Bethlehem) and Jesus is from Nazareth. Meanwhile the baffled malice of the Pharisees vents itself on the servants whom they had sent to arrest Jesus; when these try to defend themselves by speaking of the marvelous way in which Jesus had spoken, they sneer at them for being seduced by One Whose followers are to be found only among the common people, a class ignorant and accursed. This contempt for the people was characteristic of both the Sadducees and Pharisees and reveals their pride and self-opinionatedness. Still, as a matter of fact, even among the Pharisees there were some who believed, but they kept their faith hidden. Nicodemus makes a feeble attempt to recall the rulers to at least a semblance of justice in their proceedings, but they put him to silence by telling him the Scriptures should teach him that no prophet can come from Galilee. This was not true, for the prophets Jonas and Nahum were from Galilee (7, 37-53).

C. **The adulteress**, John 8, 1-11. This incident represents another attempt of the scribes and Pharisees to entrap Jesus so as to have matter for accusing Him or for lessening His popularity. If He frees this fallen woman, He will be acting contrary to the law; if He advises stoning her, as the law prescribes, He will collide with the Roman authorities who have taken away from the Jews the power to put anyone to death; finally if He follows the middle course by recommending recourse to the Roman tribunals, He will incur the enmity of the crowd who hate their foreign rulers and would resent such a trial. With clear knowledge of their malice, Jesus confounds them by transferring the whole affair from the legal to the moral order; if they are as guilty as the accused woman, they should not condemn her. To

show how little concern He feels for their malicious designs against Himself and how contemptible their whole action is, He stoops down and scribbles idly on the ground. When they have all withdrawn in shame and confusion, He turns to the woman and, seeing her repentance, pardons her with the admonition to sin no more.

**D. Jesus is the Light of Life and God Himself,** John 8, 12-59. Faith in Jesus illuminates the soul, marking out clearly the path of right living. Some demand further testimony than His own, but His testimony should suffice in itself; still He has a witness in the Father, and the Father is true. These words were spoken "in the treasury," i.e., in the Court of the Women in the Temple where there were thirteen trumpet-shaped receptacles for offerings of money (vs. 20). When the Jews ask Him Who He is since He says that unbelief in Him will leave them to die in their sin, Jesus answers, "The beginning, Who also speak unto you." In Greek the substantive "beginning" is in the accusative case; this has the force of an adverb, and the statement means "[I am] what I have told you from the beginning" or "[I am] exactly what I tell you" (vs. 25). Jesus announces to the world the truths He has received from the Father Who sent Him; the Jews fail to see that He calls God His Father, but many believe in Him when He declares that He does all things according to the will of God.

Resentment breaks out anew when He asserts that He will bestow freedom on all who believe; they say that, as children of Abraham and the chosen people of God, they have never been slaves. But they are not, in fact, true children of Abraham nor of God, for their sins stamp them as children of the devil, and this sinfulness is the root of their unbelief. Eternal life awaits those who keep His word. Taking a material meaning out of His words as usual, they think He means that His followers will not die at all; how can He say that, since Abraham and all the prophets died? Is He greater than Abraham? He is, for the great

patriarch saw His day (through revelation during his lifetime, or after death through a vision in Limbo) and rejoiced. Using the opportunity offered by their incredulous reply that He is not yet fifty years old, He declares that His existence is eternal; "before Abraham was I am." He has not come into existence; He exists always; existence belongs to His very essence, and so His being is divine. This explicit assertion of His divinity enrages them and they try to stone Him, but He eludes them and leaves the Temple without being harmed. \

E. **The blind man**, John 9, 1-41. This episode reveals both the obstinate unbelief and the childish helplessness of the Jews in their opposition to Jesus. Confronted by an evident miracle, they at first take refuge in the old charge that by violating the Sabbath rest Jesus proves that He is not of God. But some maintain that a sinner could not work such miracles. They shift, then, to an attempt to cast doubt on the miraculous cure, but the parents of the cured man, on being summoned and questioned, testify that he had actually been blind from birth. In their confusion they wish to dismiss the whole matter with a general expression of piety; let God be thanked for the cure, but no credit given to Christ, for He is a known sinner. But the cured man sturdily keeps the main fact before their eyes; after all, he had been cured by this person of his blindness. Hoping to find some flaw in his story, they demand that he repeat the manner of his cure, but he reminds them that they have already heard all the details and then ironically asks if they are inquiring with the intention of becoming His disciples. Their anger breaks forth in revilings, but their arguments vanish before his assertion that Jesus could not do such wonderful works unless God were with Him. So all they can do is to drive him out of the place of meeting; or perhaps this amounts to excommunication from the synagogue. After revealing Himself to this man as the Son of God, our Lord declares that He has come into the world

to draw the line of discrimination between the sincere and the hypocritical, and that the Pharisees in their opposition are guilty of closing their eyes to the evident truth of His divine mission.

**F. Jesus and the Father are One, John 10, 22-39.** In December at the Feast of the Dedication the Jews demand that He tell them plainly whether He is the Christ. With their notions of a Messianic kingdom of worldly splendor, they probably hope to receive an answer that will enable them to accuse Him before the Roman authorities as one who aspires to political rule. Jesus answers plainly. They do not wish to believe in Him; if it were not for their ill will, they would accept the testimony of His miraculous works. Others believe in Him, and He gives them eternal life. His power is such that no one can deprive Him of this chosen flock. That which the Father has given Him, His divine Sonship in unity of nature with the Father, is greater than anything else, and no one can take this away; a variant reading of this verse (29) gives the meaning, "the Father, Who gave Me this, is greater than all." He and the Father are one, one in power and one in nature. This obvious declaration of His divinity rouses them to such a pitch of anger that they prepare to stone Him. To quiet them a little and give them time for reflection, Jesus reminds them that the Scriptures, which cannot err, call mere men gods; hence, they should not accuse Him of blasphemy for saying that He is the Son of God since God had sanctified Him and sent Him into the world. Here Jesus changes the wording of His previous assertion, but the sense remains the same; by saying that He and the Father are one He said indirectly that He is the Son of God, and by saying that He is the Son of God He now says indirectly that He and the Father are one in nature and consequently in power. In His explanation our Lord uses a deliberate obscurity since His hearers are evidently unwilling to accept the full truth. He returns at once, however, to His earlier statements; the Father is in

Him and He is in the Father, and the proof of this is found in His works. Once more they try to seize Him, but He makes His escape.

**G. The indissolubility of matrimony,** Mark 10, 2-12; Luke 16, 18; Matt. 19, 3-12. The rabbinical schools at this time were divided on the question of divorce, and the Pharisees wish to involve Jesus in the dispute. The law permitted divorce "for some uncleanness" in the wife (Deut. 24, 1); scholars gave different interpretations to these words. The rigorous school of Shammai held that adultery was meant, while the school of Hillel taught that the term covered any objectionable act, such as the wife's going out on the street with her head uncovered. The general practice was lax, divorce was common, and the Pharisees here hoped to have our Lord take the side of the rigorists with the result that the people would turn against Him.

Jesus goes beyond the teaching even of the rigorists; He places marriage once more on its primitive level. A man may separate from his wife if she has been unfaithful, but the marriage stands and neither husband nor wife can marry again during the life of the other, for "what God has joined together, let no man put asunder." This is the true nature of matrimony, and the concession granted by Moses was intended merely as a temporary means of avoiding greater evils among a carnal-minded people. Though the wording in Matt. 19, 9, is somewhat obscure, it becomes clear in the light of the parallel passages in Mark 10, 6-12, and Luke 16, 18, as well as from the following verses in St. Matthew, where the disciples evidently understand that Jesus has taught the absolute indissolubility of marriage, for they feel that if the marriage bond is to continue even in the case of an adulterous wife, it would be better for a man not to marry.

134. *The death of Jesus decreed*, John 11, 45-56. Our Lord had returned from Perea to Bethany to restore Lazarus to life. This stupendous miracle, performed before

many witnesses, produced a profound impression and caused many to believe in Him. On receiving news of the miracle, the rulers, realizing how critical the situation is, assemble in council; Jesus had evaded all their efforts to imprison Him and now He would in all likelihood win a popularity that would render them helpless before Him. Envy and hatred blind them to the significance of the divine works which they cannot deny. All they see is the danger to their own prestige and possible complications with the Romans. In the midst of their perplexity, Caiphas addresses them; as private citizens they are at a loss to know what to do, but as high priest he will point out the course to be followed; the national security requires the death of Jesus, and that must be their definite decision. His advice is adopted at once and they set to work to devise means for carrying it out. The first step would be to arrest Jesus, and they immediately issue orders that, if anyone knows of His whereabouts, he should inform them so that they may seize Him.

St. John calls attention to the designs of God behind the declaration of the high priest; Caiphas thought only of the temporal welfare of the people, but God would use the malice of the Jews for the spiritual salvation not only of the Jewish nation but of all men of all nations. Knowing the measures taken to arrest Him, Jesus in the meantime retires from the vicinity of Jerusalem to Ephrem in the north where He keeps His disciples around Him and prepares for His final journey to Jerusalem and to death.

## Chapter XXI

### The Preliminaries of the Passion

135. This section covers the events from Sunday to Thursday before the Pasch of A.D. 29.

A. *Sources*: John 12, 12-17, 26; Mark 11, 1-14, 31; Luke 19, 29-22, 38; Matt. 21, 1-26, 35.

B. *Events*:

	John	Mark	Luke	Matt.
Sunday, entrance into Jerusalem .....	12, 12-19	11, 1-11	19, 29-44	21, 1-11
Monday, fig tree cursed		11, 12-14		21, 18-19
Sellers driven from Temple .....		11, 15-19	19, 45-48	21, 12-17
Tuesday, withered fig tree noticed by disciples .....		11, 20-26		21, 20-22
John's baptism.....		11, 27-33	20, 1-8	21, 23-27
Parable of Two Sons..				21, 28-32
Parable of Wicked Husbandmen .....		12, 1-12	20, 9-19	21, 33-46
Parable of Marriage Feast .....				22, 1-14
Tribute to Cæsar.....		12, 13-17	20, 20-26	22, 15-22
Resurrection of the dead		12, 18-27	20, 27-40	22, 23-33
The great commandment .....		12, 28-34		22, 34-40
The Son of David.....		12, 35-37	20, 41-44	22, 41-46
Scribes and Pharisees..		12, 38-40	20, 45-47	23, 1-36
The widow's mite.....		12, 41-44	21, 1-4	
Jerusalem condemned..				23, 37-39
Greeks in Temple; voice from heaven.....	12, 20-30			
Ruin of Jerusalem and end of the world....		13, 1-37	21, 5-38	24, 1-51

	John	Mark	Luke	Matt.
Parable of Ten Virgins				25, 1-13
Parable of Talents....				25, 14-30
Last Judgment.....				25, 31-46
Sanhedrin plots against				
Jesus .....		14, 1.2	22, 1.2	26, 1-5
Treason of Judas.....		14, 10.11	22, 3-6	26, 14-16
Thursday, the Last				
Supper .....	13, 1-17,26	14, 12-26	22, 7-38	26, 17-35
Greatest of the Apostles			22, 24-30	
Washing of the feet...	13, 1-20			
The traitor announced.	13, 21-30	14, 18-21	22, 21-23	26, 21-25
Holy Eucharist institu-				
ted .....		14, 22-24	22, 15-20	26, 26-28
Glorification of Jesus..	13, 31-33			
Commandment of love.	13, 34-35			
Denials of Peter fore-				
told .....	13, 36-38	14, 26-31	22, 31-34	26, 30-35
Discourse after the				
supper .....	14, 1-16,33			
The prayer of Jesus...	17, 1-26			
Leaving the supper				
room .....			22, 35-38	

**C. Summary.** Sunday Jesus enters Jerusalem in triumph, heals many in the Temple, silences the protests of the priests, and then retires, as on the following days, to the neighborhood of Bethany.

Monday on the way back to the city He curses the barren fig tree; He drives the buyers and sellers from the Temple.

Tuesday on the way to the city the disciples notice that the fig tree is withered. Jesus silences all His enemies: (1) the chief priests and ancients by demanding that they pronounce upon the baptism of John; (2) the Herodians, in league with the Pharisees, by deciding the question of tribute to Cæsar; (3) the Sadducees by vindicating the resurrection of the dead; (4) the Pharisees by pointing out the great commandments of the love of God and of the neighbor and by asking them how David could call Christ Lord since Christ was his Son. He indicates the rejection



of Israel in the Parables of the Two Sons, the Wicked Husbandmen, and the Marriage Feast. He denounces the unbelief of the Jews, praises the widow's mite, meets the Gentiles, and predicts His approaching death. On leaving the city He foretells its ruin and the end of the world and exhorts all to watchfulness in the Parables of the Ten Virgins and the Talents. The rulers plan to arrest Him and negotiate His betrayal by Judas.

Wednesday Jesus is in hiding, John 12, 36.

Thursday He sends His disciples to prepare the Pasch, eats the Last Supper with the disciples, and goes with them to the garden of Gethsemani to await His arrest.

136. *The triumphal entry into Jerusalem*, John 12, 12-19; Mark, 11, 1-11; Luke 19, 29-44; Matt. 21, 1-11. The Pasch was less than a week away and pilgrims were flocking to the city for the great festival. Jesus and His disciples had been advancing slowly from Perea toward Jerusalem, and had spent the Sabbath in Bethany. Setting out on Sunday, He did not take the road that skirted the southwestern end of the Mount of Olives, but chose a road that first climbed the southern slope of the Mount and then descended the western side. This led Him through the little village of Bethphage on the Mount, and from that point He began His triumphal advance toward the city.

From the hillside there is a striking view of the city with the Temple area in the foreground and the array of palaces and dwellings spread out almost at one's feet. It was while looking down upon the city in this fashion that Jesus wept over Jerusalem, recalling the vain attempts He had made to awaken its faith and foreseeing the awful ruin that awaited it.

As He proceeded, He was accompanied by a large crowd that had heard of His arrival at Bethany and had gone out to see both Him and Lazarus, and others poured out of the city at news of His approach, so that the multitude was very large by the time He reached the city gates. They hailed

Him with joyful acclamations and honored Him by spreading along the way their garments and boughs cut from the near-by trees. The story of the raising of Lazarus was on every tongue; it had excited the popular attention from the beginning, and the Pharisees, anxious over the increasing enthusiasm, had even gone so far as to think of murdering Lazarus in the hope of discrediting the miracle. Now they feel their helplessness and can only lament that the whole world is turning toward Jesus. They address a weak protest to our Lord suggesting that He restrain the enthusiasm of His followers, but He praises the fitness of this demonstration; if men were silent, even the stones would acclaim Him.

**137. *Monday of Holy Week*, Mark 11, 12-19; Luke 19, 45-48; Matt. 21, 12-19.** Returning to the city in the morning Jesus curses the barren fig tree to strengthen the faith of the disciples and especially to symbolize the rejection of the Jews for their failure to produce the spiritual fruits God expected of them. Though it was not the season for figs, still the tree had already put forth leaves and this should have been an indication of fruit, for the figs appear before the leaves. Our Lord, of course, was not moved by resentment toward the tree; He simply took this occasion to develop in this forceful way the spiritual lessons He wished to give the disciples.

As at the beginning of the public ministry (John 2, 13-17), so at its close Jesus clears the Temple of those who were using it for traffic to the detriment of the religious purpose it should have served. This was a rebuke to the rulers, but they dissimulated their feelings for the moment and confined themselves to a protest against His permitting the children there to hail Him as the Son of David. A quotation from the Eighth Psalm silences them; when their elders are unresponsive or contemptuous in the presence of God's manifestations of His power and magnificence, He receives genuine praise from the mouths of children.

138. *Tuesday of Holy Week.*

A. **The rejection of Israel**, Mark 11, 20-12, 12; Luke 20, 1-19; Matt. 21, 20-22, 14. Although the fig tree had been withered by our Lord's words the effect was not apparent till the next morning when the disciples noticed it on their return to the city; Jesus then urged them to appreciate the power of prayer. In the city, this day is remarkable for the amount of instruction our Lord gives and for the manner in which, in His final discussions with His numerous enemies, He reduces them all to silence.

The rulers had been consulting together and had decided to make an effort to put a stop to His public teaching and His general exercise of authority. As He is instructing the people in the Temple, they appear and demand on what authority He acts in this way. They were perfectly acquainted with His repeated claims to Messianic authority; so instead of asserting these claims once more, Jesus proposes a question to them which, if they dare to answer it correctly, will bring out clearly the foundation of His claims. John the Baptist had testified that Jesus was the Messiah; now let them declare what they think of John and his baptism. Afraid to commit themselves on this fundamental question, they can only confess their ignorance. In the Parable of the Two Sons, Jesus answers for them; John's baptism was from God. The sinners who received it had before refused to obey God, but in response to John's exhortations they had repented; the rulers and the Pharisees, however, while professing submission to all God's commands, neither kept the law nor received John. The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen drives home the same lesson of God's rejection of the Jews for their refusal to accept the kingdom of God.

In their anger the rulers would have liked to arrest Jesus on the spot, but the popular favor was too strong to be defied. Jesus expands the previous lesson in another parable,

that of the Marriage Feast, where the invited guests are found unworthy and others are called in to take their place. Even these, however, must have the proper disposition, the wedding garment [sanctifying grace], else they will be rejected.

**B. Tribute to Cæsar**, Mark 12, 13-17; Luke 20, 20-26; Matt. 22, 15-22. Another consultation among the Pharisees produces the plan of trapping Jesus into making a statement for or against the Roman government. If He took the side of the Romans, the people would resent it, while if He opposed paying tribute to the foreigner, the Romans would regard Him as a dangerous agitator. The delegation sent to propose this question was headed by some of the Herodians, a party favoring the political aspirations of the descendants of Herod in opposition to the Roman rule. They preface their question with a compliment on our Lord's fearlessness in advocating the truth, but Jesus sternly rebukes their hypocrisy and shows that He knows they are merely seeking to find some ground for accusing Him. By accepting the coin of Cæsar, they acknowledge his dominion over them, and so they have no right to refuse to pay him tribute; at the same time they must see to it that the claims of God are properly maintained.

**C. The resurrection of the dead**, Mark 12, 18-27; Luke 20, 27-40; Matt. 22, 23-33. It is now the turn of the Sadducees to try their skill in entangling Jesus in His speech. They bring forward their typical question concerning the resurrection of the dead, thinking they have found an example showing its impossibility. Their example would have presented a real problem to those holding the current ideas of a Messianic kingdom amid material delights, and they have used it effectively in their disputes with the Pharisees. But Jesus refutes them easily by throwing out at once their gross notions about the life after death and assuring them that the risen bodies will have a spiritual nature free from carnal desires. Then taking up the broader question

of immortality, He shows that God implies the continued existence of the patriarchs in speaking of Himself as their God, for He says He is, not He was, their God and so they must be still living.

**D. The last discussion with the Pharisees,** Mark 12, 28-37; Luke 20, 41-44 (cf. Luke 10, 25-28); Matt. 22, 34-46. The purpose behind the first section of this discussion is not certain. From St. Matthew it seems to be another attempt to carp at our Lord's teaching, but St. Mark puts the inquiry in a more favorable light as an honest question. Perhaps the term "tempting" in St. Matthew is to be taken in the wider sense of merely testing or putting to the proof without any connotation of malice, or if malice is implied, it is in the other Pharisees and not in the individual who proposes the question. The prevalent schools often debated the relative dignity or importance of the various precepts and naturally arrived at different conclusions. Jesus places the genuine love of God first and love of neighbor second. Then turning to the assembled Pharisees, He propounds a question for them to solve. Since the Messiah is the Son of David, how can David call Him Lord? This is a real difficulty for them since they regard the Messiah as a mere man and are unprepared to consider Him as God existing from eternity; and so they can find no answer, and henceforth are afraid to question Him.

**E. Christ denounces the scribes and Pharisees,** Mark 12, 38-40; Luke 20, 45-47 (cf. Luke 11, 39-54); Matt. 23, 1-39. The scribes and Pharisees occupy the position of authoritative teachers of the Law; hence, they deserved obedience in whatever is not opposed to the Law or to justice or to truth. But they are not to be followed in what they add to the Law, in their rigorous demands for an impossible observance of the Law and in the countless subtleties which weigh down upon men like insupportable burdens. Some of their methods of ostentation are then described. Pious Jews wore on the forehead or arm, bands of

parchment, called phylacteries, inscribed with texts from Exodus (13, 1-10; 11, 16) and Deuteronomy (6, 4-9; 11, 13-21), in this way obeying literally the precept in Deut. 11, 18, "Lay up these My words in your hearts and minds; and hang them for a sign on your hands, and place them between your eyes." To surpass others the Pharisees made their phylacteries conspicuously large. They likewise lengthened the fringes of white and blue which hung at the four corners of their cloaks (Deut. 22, 12). They loved the places of honor everywhere and the respectful salutations that acknowledged their superiority. All such vanity is to be avoided by the disciples of Jesus.

Then our Lord severely condemns the pretensions and pride of these men, who instead of assisting others spiritually hinder them from entering the kingdom. Theirs will be a terrible judgment before the tribunal of God. Their piety is only a cloak for their avarice, their zeal results only in making their converts worse than they were before by adding hypocrisy and pride to their previous vices. Their foolish distinctions lead to perjury. With scrupulous care they go beyond the requirements of the Law in such trifles as the tithing of small herbs, while the essential precepts of justice in their tribunals, mercy, and fidelity to their word are forgotten. All their piety is external, leaving their hearts a prey to every iniquity. They are the true sons of their fathers who killed the prophets sent them by God, for in plotting His death they imitate their example. Punishment for such crimes will come upon this generation (in the destruction of Jerusalem).

Jesus has made repeated efforts to save the people, but they have continued obdurate, and so they will suffer. They will not see Him henceforth; He is now bringing to a close His work of teaching and healing, and after this He will appear in Jerusalem publicly only as the Victim of sin. But the way to conversion will not be completely closed; they will see Him, not in His mortal body, but in His presence

in the Church, when they are willing to acknowledge that He is the Messias. Some interpret these words as referring to the passion; the Paschal meal was probably closed with the chanting of Psalm 117 in which occur the words, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord"; hence, Jesus could mean that His next appearance among them would be at the time of this Paschal meal when He would be brought forth to die. According to others the sense is that the day will come (at the destruction of Jerusalem or at the final judgment) when they will be forced to recognize Him as the Messias.

**F. The destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world,** Mark 13, 1-33; Luke 21, 5-36; Matt. 24, 1-42. This discourse contains a double prophecy describing the ruin of the city and the end of the world. The former, moreover, is taken as a foreshadowing of the latter. After the custom of the prophets, Jesus mingles the near future with the remote, and so it is left to the reader to distinguish the various elements and apply them properly; this is often quite difficult till the prophecy has been fulfilled. For the disciples, both events were still in the future; for us the distinction, though still difficult, is more readily defined because the part on the fate of Jerusalem has already happened.

The prophecy is made in answer to the question of the disciples; they ask about the future of both the city and the world, and so the answer embraces both. First, there is a general survey of the future as affecting the Church. Many will assume the name of Christ in the hope of winning a following. There will be wars, local and distant, with their usual accompaniments of pestilence and famine, and also earthquakes. Persecutions, scandals, and false teachings will cool the divine love in the hearts of many, but the end of the world will not come till the Gospel has been offered to all nations (Matt. 24, 1-14).

The fall of Jerusalem is to be marked by the abomina-

tion of desolation in the holy place as depicted by the prophet Daniel (Dan. 9, 27). This is to be some terrible profanation of the Temple; as it is to be "standing" in the holy place, it seems to be a person or a statue. The interpretations given to this are many; for some it is the statue of the Roman Emperor Hadrian which was erected on the site of the Temple; for others it is the Roman armies besieging Jerusalem, while others still see in it the crimes committed in the Temple by the Jews themselves during the siege. When this national calamity is imminent, the only safety will be in flight; they are to flee without delay and are to pray that their flight may not be during the rigors of winter nor on the Sabbath. The closing words sketching the devastating nature of these tribulations pertain more particularly to the end of the world (Matt. 24, 15-22).

As the time of the final judgment approaches, there will arise false Christs and false prophets, men claiming to be Christ or to speak in His name and with diabolical aid performing tricks of magic with such skill that, if it were not for the special help of God, even the elect might be deceived. But now they are put on their guard by Christ's warning. There is no excuse for being deceived, for the second coming of Christ will be as strikingly manifested as the lightning which flashes across the whole extent of the sky. Then all men will be gathered to the place of judgment just as vultures flock to the spot where a dead body lies. Then, while the sun and moon are darkened and flaming meteors fall from the sky, the Cross will appear in the heavens amid the lamentations of unbelievers, and Christ will come in the clouds of heaven with great power and majesty. With loud sounding trumpets the angels will summon the elect from the most remote parts of the earth (Matt. 24, 23-31).

The exact time when all this will happen is not to be revealed, even the Son (Mark 13, 32) does not know it as communicable (as part of His mission), and so there is a



deliberate obscurity in the closing words (Matt. 24, 32-42). The signs have been indicated; at their appearance men can judge that the coming of Christ is at hand as surely as they can tell the coming of summer from the appearance of the trees. The generation now living will not pass away till the prophecy is fulfilled in the fall of Jerusalem, and that fall will be a figure of the evils preceding the end of the world. But only the Father knows the precise time of the final catastrophe. For most men it will come unexpectedly; just as before the deluge, they will be occupied with their ordinary affairs; but the faithful must be always prepared (Matt. 24, 32-42).

A brief description of the final judgment is given in Matt. 25, 31-46. Before the tribunal of the Supreme Judge the angels assemble all men and divide the just from the wicked as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. The just are welcomed to the possession of their eternal inheritance, the wicked condemned to an eternity of loss ("depart from Me") and pain. Though each and every one of man's works will be weighed, the love of the neighbor is used in illustration because of its importance and to teach the unity of Christ's mystical body since He identifies Himself with His brethren.

**G. The parables on vigilance,** Matt. 24, 42-25, 30 (cf. Mark 13, 33-37; Luke 12, 35-48; 21, 34-36). Since the Son of Man is to come suddenly and the time of His coming is unknown, the practical conclusion to be drawn is that men must be ready to meet Him at all times. This lesson of continuous vigilance is enforced by four parables.

If a man knew that a thief was about to break into his home, he would certainly be on the watch to prevent him; they know with certainty that the day of judgment is coming, though they do not know the time, and so they must be always prepared (Matt. 24, 42-44).

When a servant has been placed in charge of the other servants of a household during the absence of the master,

the master will return unexpectedly and will reward or punish that servant according to the fidelity with which he has managed the house. In the same way those given authority in Christ's kingdom must have their affairs in good order at all times, lest on His return He find that they have been unfaithful in the administration of their office (Matt. 24, 45-51).

According to the wedding customs of the East, ten virgins are waiting with the bride for the arrival of the groom, who will then lead the bride in joyful procession to his own house for the marriage feast. The groom delays, the bridesmaids fall asleep, and the little lamps they are to carry in the procession burn out. When at last the groom arrives, some of the maids quickly fill their lamps, but the others discover that they have no fresh supply of oil; while they hurry off to get some, the procession wends its way to the groom's house, and when these maids return, the door is shut and they are excluded from the feast. The disciples, too, are to be ready always, no matter how long Christ's coming may be delayed (Matt. 25, 1-13).

About to start on a journey, a master leaves various sums of money with his servants to be used for his profit; on his return, demanding an accounting, he rewards those who have used the money well and punishes the one who has let the capital lie idle. The disciples are to make good use of God's gifts so that they can give a reasonable account to the Judge at His coming; the better use they make of the graces received, the more will be added to them (Matt. 25, 14-30).

### 139. *Thursday of Holy Week.*

**A. The day of the Last Supper.** The Paschal lamb was killed in the Temple on the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan and eaten at the Paschal meal on the evening of the same day (Exod. 12, 6 ff.). The four Evangelists agree in stating clearly that our Lord ate the Last Supper on a Thursday, was crucified on Friday, was in the tomb over

Saturday, and rose from the dead early Sunday morning. From the first days of the Church, however, the day of the month on which the Last Supper was eaten has been a subject of controversy. The Synoptics seem to say that in accordance with the law it was on the 14th of Nisan, for they say that it was the "first day of the unleavened bread," "when they sacrificed the Pasch" or "on which it was necessary that the Pasch should be killed" (Matt. 26, 17; Mark 14, 12; Luke 22, 7). St. John, on the other hand, seems to say that the Last Supper took place the day before the Jews ate the Paschal meal, for it was "before the festival day of the Jews" (13, 1), and when the leaders stood before the tribunal of Pilate the next day they had not yet eaten the Pasch (18, 28).

Of the various explanations offered to reconcile these statements, the most probable may be reduced to three. (1) Jesus anticipated the legal day and ate the Pasch on the 13th of Nisan; (2) Jesus and the Jews ate the meal on the legal day, the 14th of Nisan; (3) Jesus ate the Paschal meal on the 14th of Nisan, but the Jews postponed it till the 15th. Solutions (1) and (3) follow St. John and interpret the Synoptics in accordance with his statements, while solution (2) follows the Synoptics and explains St. John in the light of their statements.

*Solution 1.* Besides the direct statements in John 13, 1 and 18, 28, this theory is supported by the following arguments. (a) St. John says (19, 14) that the crucifixion was on the 14th of Nisan, the parasceve (vigil or eve) of the Pasch, the 15th of Nisan. (b) The Saturday after the crucifixion was a great Sabbath Day (John 19, 31), i.e., the Pasch itself fell on this Sabbath. (c) Friday could not have been the Pasch, for on that day, when all work was forbidden just as on the Sabbath, the Jews would not have brought Jesus before Pilate and Herod.

According to a recent explanation of this theory, Jesus ate the Paschal meal on the 13th, the Jews on the 14th because

the 15th fell on a Saturday and it was not allowed to kill the Paschal lamb on the eve of the Sabbath; so the lambs were all killed on Thursday the 13th, and it was permitted to eat the Paschal meal that same evening or to wait till the next evening, Friday.

*Solution 2.* Besides the direct statements of the Synoptics, this theory appeals to the following: (a) John 13, 1, uses the Roman, not the Jewish, way of reckoning the days and so does not consider the Feast of the Pasch as beginning until the following day; hence, the 14th of Nisan even after sundown would still be for St. John the day before the Pasch, though the Jews counted the new day as beginning at sundown. (b) John 18, 28, does not refer to the Paschal meal but to the sacrificial meal (the *Chagigah*) of the next day or to the general celebration of the festival. (c) John 19, 14, uses the term "parasceve" not in the strict sense of vigil or eve, but simply as an accepted term for Friday which was the parasceve of the Sabbath. (d) John 19, 31, does not necessarily mean that the Saturday was the first day of the feast, but indicates that it was an especially solemn day because this Sabbath happened to occur during the seven days of the Paschal festival.

*Solution 3.* This theory offers the easiest way of reconciling the Synoptics and St. John, but its defenders have difficulty in explaining why the Jews should have postponed the eating of the Paschal lamb. Some suggest that they were simply mistaken in the day; the legal day was the 14th day after the appearance of the new moon in the month of Nisan, but the new moon was recognized by ordinary observation and not by strictly scientific methods, and so an error could easily be made. Others appeal to a custom, in force at least in the fourth century, of postponing the feast whenever it would fall on a Friday so as to avoid having two days of rest in succession. Others call attention to the meagerness of our knowledge of the customs of the times and suggest the possibility of rules, now unknown,

for changing the date of the feast; in their eagerness to secure our Lord's condemnation the Pharisees and rulers might readily have used or invented some subtle distinction.

Another explanation of the whole situation is based on the well-known hostility prevailing between the Sadducees and the Pharisees and reaches the conclusion that while the Sadducees celebrated the feast on Saturday, the Pharisees, followed by the common people, celebrated it on Friday. The Sadducees contended that the offering of the first fruits at the Pasch must be made on the day after the Sabbath in Paschal week; this meant that Pentecost, the fiftieth day after the offering of these first fruits, would always fall on a Sunday. The Pharisees, however, placed the offering of the first fruits on the 16th of Nisan, the second day of Paschal week. When the Pasch fell on a Saturday, the two parties had no difference regarding the first-fruit offering since the Sadducees accepted the 16th of Nisan as the proper day, because it then actually was a Sunday. To embarrass their rivals, the Sadducees would try to manipulate the calendar so as to have the 15th of Nisan come on Saturday, while the Pharisees would be equally zealous to have it come a day earlier. It is hard to decide which party was responsible for the manipulation of the calendar this year, but, it is argued, when the error or fraud was discovered, the commission intrusted with the arrangement of the calendar tried to satisfy both parties by permitting a double celebration of the feast for that year. As a consequence, for the Pharisees, followed by our Lord and most of the people, the 15th of Nisan was Friday and the Paschal meal was eaten Thursday evening, while for the Sadducees the feast was on Saturday and the Paschal meal on Friday.

**B. The Last Supper,** John 13, 1-17, 26; Mark 14, 12-25; Luke 22, 7-38; Matt. 26, 7-29. During the early part of the Paschal meal Jesus gives the disciples an example of humility by washing the feet of all, even of Judas who has already pledged himself to betray Him. Then, to impress

upon them His perfect freedom in entering upon His passion, He announces that He is about to be betrayed by one of them; in their consternation and anxiety they are impatient to know who it is, but Jesus reveals the traitor in such a way that only Judas and John understand. It seems that the traitor left the room immediately and therefore was not present at the institution of the Holy Eucharist; the chief objection against this opinion is that St. Luke tells of his leaving only after the institution of the Eucharist, but it is not certain that St. Luke is here keeping to the chronological order.

At the end of the Paschal meal, while they are still at table, Jesus takes a portion of the unleavened bread, blesses it, breaks it, and distributes it to His disciples with the words, "This is My body," i.e., this which I hold in My hands and am about to pass to you, is no longer bread, but it is My body. The words produce that which they signify; they change the substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ. St. Luke adds "which is given for you"; which is delivered to death for your salvation (cf. 1 Cor. 11, 23). Then Jesus commands the disciples to do this in commemoration of Him; the Eucharist, in the mystical separation of the body and blood, is a commemoration of the death of Christ and of man's liberation from the power of sin just as the Pasch was a commemoration of the deliverance of the Jews from the power of the Egyptians. By these words our Lord ordained the disciples priests (Denz. 938). Then taking the cup of wine, He blessed it and gave it to them to drink saying, "This is My blood of the New Testament which is shed for many." The substance of the wine is changed by these words into the substance of the blood of Christ; His blood sanctions the new covenant of God with man as the old covenant had been ratified by the blood of victims (Exod. 24, 8). Since the shedding and offering of blood was the chief factor in sacrifice, these words show

that the Eucharist is a true sacrifice. "Many" is either for "all" or many will profit, while all have the chance to profit.

a) *The last discourse*, John 13, 31-16, 33. In this part of His farewell address Jesus speaks with great tenderness and earnestness, revealing His Sacred Heart to His disciples as far as possible in view of their limited outlook and yearning to reveal it more and more. It is a familiar conversation with frequent digressions and repetitions; the more important topics will be here considered. It is not at all improbable that some of this discourse was spoken only after they had left the supper room, especially the prophecy of Peter's denials (13, 36-38) and the comparison of the vine (15, 1 ff.).

b) *The passion and glory of Christ*, John 13, 31-33. Jesus is even now glorified, for in the passion He is obedient unto death and for that reason God gives Him a name above every other name (Phil. 2, 9.10), and the passion is now so close that it may be looked upon as already arrived. His sufferings glorify God and God in turn glorifies Him by raising Him from the dead and bringing Him in triumph to His heavenly throne.

c) *The new commandment of love*, John 13, 34-35 (cf. 15, 12-17). As a summary of His moral doctrine Jesus exhorts them to a mutual love like the love He has for them. Though commanded in the Old Law, this love is something new in its perfection; it embraces all men, enemies as well as friends, with unselfish intensity, seeking only their highest good and hesitating at no sacrifice; it has for its motive the love of Christ, for all men are His brethren and are actually or potentially members of His mystical body; its model is the Incarnate Son of God, submitting to a shameful death to deliver men from the eternal death due to sin and to make them partakers of His divine life.

d) *The direct effects of Christ's departure*, John 14, 1-16,

33. They were naturally distressed at the thought of being deprived of the presence and companionship of Jesus, but He must leave them and His going is for their advantage. He goes to prepare a place for them in heaven and He will come again to take them to Himself. He is the way or road leading to the Father; by the merits of His death He throws open that road, and by His doctrine, His graces, and His example He leads men along it. He is the truth, the full revelation of divine truth, shedding bright, steady light on the problems of life left obscure by mere reason. He is the life, for He destroys sin, the death of the soul, and confers the supernatural life of grace on earth and of glory in heaven. Every man must believe in Him, for there is no other way leading to the Father. So truly are He and the Father one that he who sees Jesus sees the Father, and he who comes to Jesus comes to the Father. The second verse has been variously interpreted. Some take it as meaning, "If not, I would have told you that I go"; but in fact He does tell them that He is going; others make it a question, "If not, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?"; but He had not told them this before. The meaning is, "If (there were) not (many mansions in My Father's house), I would have told you (so that you would not be expecting that, but let not your heart be troubled) for I go to prepare a place for you." By sending the Holy Ghost and distributing His graces Jesus prepares places in heaven, since He renders men worthy to occupy these places (14, 1-11).

His departure will bring to them the power of doing works even greater than His own; besides the gift of performing miracles, He will give them the means of spreading the Gospel over the whole earth. By the decree of His Father His field of labor had been limited to Palestine and His mission was to be carried out in humility and suffering, but in glory He will extend the work of salvation to all men through them. They are to pray to the Father in His name, and Jesus, enjoying the same power as the



Father, will answer their prayers, and in this way the Father will be glorified in Him (14, 12-14).

His departure will open the way for the coming of the Holy Ghost. When deprived of the visible presence of Christ, they will be consoled, protected, and helped by the Holy Spirit Who will be personally with them and in them and their successors forever (14, 16.17). The Holy Ghost will lead them to a complete understanding of all Christ's doctrine, for as yet they have understood it only imperfectly (14, 25.26). The Holy Ghost will be sent by the Son from the Father (hence He proceeds from both the Father and the Son), and His testimony, together with that of the Apostles, will be set up against those who hate Christ (15, 26.27).

The prospect of future struggles fills the Apostles with sorrow, but in the light and strength of this Holy Spirit they will win a perfect and glorious victory over all the forces of evil, for the Holy Ghost will prove to the world that it sins grievously in rejecting Jesus, will vindicate all that He has claimed for Himself and His mission (so that men will have to recognize Him as just and pleasing to God since the Father will glorify Him), and will make clear the condemnation which the world deserves and which it will receive unless it changes, for the prince of evil is already condemned (and his defeat is seen in the redemption brought by Christ, in the conversion of many to Christ, and in the delivery of possessed persons from the power of the devil). Besides bringing them perfect knowledge of all Christ's teachings, the Holy Ghost will reveal the future to them, giving them the gift of prophecy. He will not speak independently of the Father and the Son, but like an ambassador He will deliver the message intrusted to Him by Those Who send Him. He proceeds not only from the Father, but from the Son also, since the Son possesses the same divine nature as the Father and sends the Holy Spirit (16, 6-15).

Christ's departure from them will be only temporal and

partial. He will return to them shortly, they will see Him again after His resurrection. Not merely that, but He will remain with them, making His dwelling in their hearts, He and the Father. This will be through grace (but He will be with them also in the Holy Eucharist, 14, 18-24). He leaves them a peace not to be obtained from the world, for His peace is true, supernatural, and enduring. As man, Jesus is less than the Father; He rejoices, then, at the prospect of going to the Father, and so His Apostles also should be glad. Since He foretells His going away, their faith will be strengthened when the event fulfills His words. But the Father has decreed that Jesus is to come to Him by way of the cross, and so Satan is permitted to come against Him in the passion, that God's plan for redeeming men may be carried out, though Christ's perfect holiness keeps the prince of evil from having any claim on Him. Out of love for His Father Jesus consents to all the suffering Satan is permitted to inflict upon Him (14, 27-31).

The Apostles are to continue united to Him in loyal love, as good branches remain united to the vine; but as good branches are pruned to make them more fruitful, the minds and hearts of the Apostles have been cleansed from unworthy thoughts and ambitions by the training they have received from Jesus so that they may bring forth abundant fruit to the glory of God. This union of love with its fruits of faithful service will fill them with lasting joy (15, 1-11). As His friends, He has revealed to them the intimacies of His love and doctrine. They are to be like Him; this involves suffering similar to His from a hostile world; they will be driven out of the synagogue, and fanatics will even imagine that to kill them is to do the will of God. But the example of their Master and the strengthening presence of the Holy Ghost will fortify them to preach the Gospel with constancy (15, 12-16, 4). Their sorrow will soon pass into joy; having mourned during the passion, they will rejoice in the resurrec-

tion; they will endure tribulation during life, but the glory of heaven awaits them. On the contrary, the wicked will have a joy that will soon turn to bitter and enduring sorrow (John 16, 16-22).

In joy and sorrow let them pray in His name and He will answer their prayers; the Father Himself will answer, too, for He loves them. The divine plan for the salvation of the world is concisely summed up in His coming into the world from the Father and His return from the world to the Father. Though they feel confident of their faith in Him now, the hour of the passion is at hand when they will all be dispersed; but then and at all times let them have confidence, for He has overcome the world, and this victory of His includes their victory (John 16, 23-33).

e) *The priestly prayer of Christ*, John 17, 1-26. With His work on earth drawing to a close, Jesus prays for Himself (1-5), for the Apostles (6-19), and for the whole Church (20-26).

For Himself He asks the glory of His divinity to be enjoyed now not merely as the Word but as the Word made flesh, not merely as God but as God-man. His glorification is the reward of the work carried out according to the Father's will, for He has given men eternal life which consists in the knowledge and love of God and of Christ; and this glorification itself promotes the glory of God, for it means the spread of the Gospel over the whole earth, and the establishing of the reign of Christ as absolute king for subjecting all men to the holy will of God.

For the Apostles He asks the divine aid and protection because they have believed in Him and are therefore His glory, and because He is sending them out to face opposition from all the forces of evil in the world even as He Himself had been sent by the Father. He has offered Himself as a sacrificial victim in giving Himself up entirely to their training and the salvation of mankind in order that

the Apostles, too, may be consecrated completely to the work of truth contained in the Gospel and may be fortified with all the necessary virtues.

For the Church He asks unity, a union of minds and wills founded on the same faith and the same divine love and in such contrast with the selfish discord of the world that men must recognize Christ as the divine source of this unity. His will is that in due time they may be with Him in heaven to behold His eternal glory.

140. *On the road to Gethsemani*, Mark 14, 26-31; Luke 22, 31-38; Matt. 26, 30-35. After His discourse to the disciples, Jesus leads them out of the city, across the brook Cedron, and a short distance up the opposite slopes of the Mount of Olives to the garden of Gethsemani (i.e., the place of the oil press). When He refers once more to His passion, Peter protests that it will not be a source of scandal to him, whatever it may be for others, and Jesus foretells his denials. But Jesus has prayed for him so that his faith may not fail, and he is to be the support of the others; this is a further confirmation of Peter's Primacy (Luke 22, 31-34). Under the image of swords Jesus again describes the great trial awaiting them; when they take His words literally, He dismisses the subject, perhaps ironically, with the remark, "It is enough."

## Chapter XXII

### The Passion

141. A. *Sources:* John 18.19; Mark 14, 32-15, 47; Luke 22, 39-23, 56; Matt. 26, 36-27, 66.

#### B. *Events:*

	John	Mark	Luke	Matt.
The agony in the garden .....	18, 1	14, 32-42	22, 39-46	26, 36-46
The arrest of Jesus....	18, 2-12	14, 43-52	22, 47-54	26, 47-56
Before Annas.....	18, 13-23			
Before Caiphas and the Sanhedrin .....	18, 24	14, 53-64	22, 54	26, 57-66
Denials of Peter.....	18, 15-27	14, 66-72	22, 55-62	26, 69-75
Maltreatment of Jesus..		14, 65	22, 63-65	26, 67-68
Before the Sanhedrin again .....		15, 1	22, 66-71	27, 1
Despair of Judas.....				27, 3-10
First trial before Pilate.	18, 28-32	15, 2-3	23, 1-7	27, 2-14
Before Herod.....			23, 8-11	
Second trial before Pilate .....	18, 33-38			
Barabbas .....	18, 39-40	15, 6-14	23, 12-23	27, 15-23
Scourging and mockery	19, 1-7	15, 16-20		27, 26-30
Third trial and condemnation .....	19, 8-16	15, 15	23, 24-25	27, 24-25
Way of the cross.....	19, 17	15, 21-25	23, 26-32	27, 31-34
Crucifixion .....	19, 18-24	15, 24-28	23, 33-38	27, 35-38
Jesus is blasphemed ...		15, 29-32	23, 34-37	27, 39-44
The good thief .....			23, 39-43	
The Blessed Virgin and St. John.....	19, 25-27			
Agony and death of Jesus .....	19, 28-30	15, 33-38	23, 44-46	27, 45-53
The centurion and the women .....	19, 25-31-37	15, 39-41	23, 47-49	27, 54-56
Burial of Jesus.....	19, 38-42	15, 42-47	23, 50-56	27, 57-61
Guards at the sepulcher				27, 62-66

142. *The agony in the garden*, John 18, 1; Mark 14, 32-42; Luke 22, 39-46; Matt. 26, 36-46. Arrived at Gethsemani, Jesus leaves the disciples near the entrance and goes farther into the garden with Peter, James, and John to pray, before beginning His passion, for strength to bear the terrible sufferings awaiting Him. Sorrow and apprehension fill His heart; so vehement is His distress that it seems as though death were already hovering over Him. He has felt the near approach of His passion and the thought sickens Him; He sees Himself as the victim bearing the sins of the whole world, and that burden of sins is almost too heavy to be borne; He realizes, too, that for many, because of their unbelief, His sacrifice is to be fruitless. He asks His three disciples to watch and pray for their own strengthening and to afford Him at least this slight comfort of companionship in His sorrow. Then, withdrawing a short distance from them, He falls prostrate on the ground and pours out the sorrows of His heart before His heavenly Father.

The intensity of His anguish and of His prayer, in which natural repugnance and force of will struggle for the mastery, drives the blood to the surface of the body and bathes Him in a bloody perspiration that trickles down upon the ground. Though His whole nature recoils from the fearful ordeal before Him, He recognizes that it is the will of the Father that He should endure it, and so He accepts it all willingly. An angel finally appears to Him, bringing Him the comforting assurance of the Father's acceptance of His sacrifice and of its profit for souls.

Twice He interrupts His prayer to return to His disciples, but He finds them sleeping. Gently upbraiding them for their neglect, He urges them to pray against the approaching temptations to which their faith will be exposed. However willing, they are weak and so should seek strength from God. When He comes to them again at the close of His prayer, He tells them that they may now sleep if they can, for the moment of His betrayal is at hand, or perhaps

a short interval of quiet comes after His remark and so they can really get a little rest. Then He advances to meet His enemies.

143. *Christ's arrest*, John 18, 2-12; Mark 14, 43-52; Luke 22, 47-54; Matt. 26, 47-56. When the traitor approaches with the Jews and soldiers, Jesus first gives a new proof of His power by causing all to fall helpless before Him and then submits quietly to arrest, showing that He accepts His passion not because He is powerless to escape but because He wills it. It is because He desires to submit that He rebukes Peter's ineffectual attempt to defend Him; were force to decide, He had at His command the hosts of heaven. Then, before delivering Himself into the hands of His enemies, He sees to it that His disciples are permitted to go unmolested and reproaches His captors with the unbecoming manner in which they have come to take Him as though He were a common criminal. As the representatives of the forces of evil, a brief period has been granted them to work their will upon Him, and that period has now arrived. Then, with the withdrawal of His disciples, Jesus stands alone among His enemies, is bound fast and led away.

A young man, wearing only a linen robe over his inner tunic, follows the procession till the soldiers try to seize him; he makes his escape, leaving the robe in their hands. His identity is unknown; many, however, consider him to have been the Evangelist St. Mark since the incident is recorded only in the second Gospel.

144. *Christ's trial before the Jewish rulers*, John 18, 13-14.19-24; Mark 14, 53-15, 1; Luke 22, 54.63-71; Matt. 26, 57-27, 1. Some obscurity surrounds the exact sequence of events here. It is clear that Jesus was tried before Caiphas and the Sanhedrin; it is disputed (1) whether He was examined by Annas, and (2) whether He was tried twice by Caiphas and the Sanhedrin.

A. **Before Annas.** St. John alone tells of our Lord's being brought before Annas. In this he seems to be follow-

ing his usual method of supplementing the accounts of the Synoptics, and so it seems probable that Jesus was questioned by Annas before His trial by Caiphas.

Many, however, hold that Jesus was merely brought into the presence of Annas and that the examination given in John 18, 19-23, was before Caiphas and hence is the same as that given by the Synoptics. Though John 18, 24 seems to exclude this view, it is explained either as having been changed from its proper place after 18, 13, or as having the force of "Annas had sent him bound to Caiphas." The arguments favoring this opinion are: (*a*) the examination was before the high priest, and St. John always reserves this title for Caiphas; (*b*) 18, 14 introduces Caiphas and it seems natural to suppose that what follows refers to him and not to Annas; (*c*) the denials of Peter (18, 15-18) are inserted just before this examination and located in the court of the high priest, and we know from the Synoptics that the denials took place in the courtyard of Caiphas.

But fairly satisfactory answers have been given to all these arguments. (*a*) High priests, in the plural, are frequently mentioned by St. John (7, 45; 11, 47-56; 18, 3-35; 19, 6-15, 21). (*b*) 18, 14 does not interrupt the narrative about Annas, but simply comments on the attitude of Caiphas. (*c*) Annas was then dwelling in the house of Caiphas, or his own house was next to that of Caiphas and the two had a common courtyard. Besides, there seems to be no solid reason for supposing that John 18, 24 is not in its proper place or that it does anything but continue the narrative; hence, the sense must be that after Annas had questioned Jesus, he sent Him to Caiphas.

**B. Before the Sanhedrin.** This time the difficulty arises from St. Luke. He gives the events immediately after Christ's arrest in this way: Jesus is led to the house of the high priest, Peter denies Him, and Jesus is mocked by His captors; then in the morning ("as soon as it was day") the Sanhedrin assembles, tries, and condemns Jesus and leads



Him to Pilate. In St. Matthew and St. Mark the order of events is: Jesus is tried before Caiphas and the assembled Sanhedrin; then He is mocked by the servants, while in the meantime Peter denies Him; later in the morning the Sanhedrin assembles again, this time, it seems, to consult on the method to be followed in having Pilate ratify their sentence. The probable solution is that there were two trials before the Sanhedrin; in the first, given by St. Matthew and St. Mark, Jesus is condemned; the second trial simply went through the form of having Jesus repeat His supposed blasphemy, confirmed the sentence previously passed, and consulted about the way to have the sentence carried out. This explanation receives some confirmation from the supposition that the Sanhedrists felt uneasy about their first condemnation of Jesus because the session had been held during the night contrary to the law concerning capital cases, and also from the further supposition that many of the members of the council had been absent from the first session on account of the early hour at which it was held.

**C. Before Annas,** John 18, 19-24. Jesus was brought to Annas as a compliment to this ex-high priest who was still very influential, or in the hope that the wily old man would be able to extort some damaging evidence from Him that might be useful in the real trial before Caiphas. To his questions about His disciples and doctrine, Jesus refuses to reply, referring him to those who had heard Him speaking in public. When one of the attendants strikes Him, He challenges the man to prove that His words had been unbecoming. Seeing that his efforts were in vain, Annas sends the prisoner to Caiphas.

**D. Before Caiphas,** Mark 14, 53-64; Matt. 26, 57-66. A large number of the Sanhedrists had been anxiously waiting with Caiphas for the arrival of Jesus, and on His appearance they begin the trial at once. Witnesses have been bribed to testify against Him, but their statements are not found to be as consistent as the law required in a capital trial. But

the court had long since decided on the conviction of Jesus, and with the failure of this pretense at justice they resort to the more direct method of having the accused testify against Himself. Caiphas demands that He tell them under oath whether He is the Son of God; Jesus not merely affirms that He is, but adds that they will see Him sitting at the right hand of God and coming (at the last judgment) in the clouds of heaven. Concealing his joy at this confession under a mask of righteous indignation, Caiphas accuses Him of blasphemy and appeals to the others to pronounce the sentence fixed by the law for blaspheming the name of God.

**E. The morning session,** Mark 15, 1; Luke 22, 66-71; Matt. 27, 1. Our Lord had been arrested shortly after midnight; His trial before Caiphas was held in the early hours of the morning. A little before dawn the Sanhedrin again convened. Meanwhile, Peter had denied His Master and Jesus had been exposed to the mockery of the rulers' servants. In the morning session Jesus is once more challenged to declare His divine Sonship, the sentence of death is ratified, and their plans for presenting Him to the Roman governor are perfected. This last step was necessary, for the Romans had reserved to themselves the power of executing criminals, though the Jewish court was permitted to conduct the trial and to pass sentence. The execution of St. Stephen (Act. 7, 54-57) and of St. James the Less (Josephus, *Antiq.* XX, 9, 1) are sometimes adduced to cast doubt on this restriction of the power of the Jewish authorities; but, though St. Stephen was tried regularly before the council, he was put to death in a moment of popular excitement, and St. James was martyred in the interval between the death of one Roman procurator and the arrival of his successor.

145. **The denials of St. Peter,** John 18, 15-18.25-27; Mark 14, 66-72; Luke 22, 55-62; Matt. 26, 69-75. The denials took place while Jesus was being questioned by Annas and Caiphas and mocked by the servants. Different details are

given by the Evangelists; St. Matthew and St. Mark mention two denials before maid servants and one before the bystanders; St. Luke, one before a maid servant and two before individual men; St. John one before the portress (who may have been one of the maid servants in the Synoptics), one before the bystanders, and a third before a friend of Malchus. These details involve no difficulty, for in such a crowd it is natural to suppose that many would take a hand in adding to the discomfiture of the Apostle and that in his excitement he would reply now to one and now to another. Each Evangelist selects three denials to show the fulfillment of our Lord's prophecy that Peter would deny Him three times. But Jesus evidently did not restrict the denials in such a way as to say that Peter in denying Him would speak only three times and with the precision of one being questioned quietly and formally. The prophecy is fulfilled as long as Peter denied Him three times, and the number three looks rather to the separate occasions, on each one of which, however, Peter may have had to reply in turn to a number of nagging questions. At such a time of bustle and excitement in a courtyard crowded with chattering soldiers and servants moving to and fro around the fire kindled in the center, it is easy to imagine that the attention of the crowd would be alternately drawn to Peter and then turned away from him as some fresh incident aroused their curiosity.

The Galileans were always targets for the wit or ridicule of the citizens of Jerusalem. They exhibited the mingled boldness and bashfulness of country folk in a large city and stood in awe of the easy and more refined manners of the inhabitants. Besides, their dialect, in which many of the Hebrew sounds were modified or obscured, readily revealed their northern origin and was a constant source of amusement or jest for those speaking the purer language of the south.

The sin of Peter was not the loss of faith but weakness in professing the faith which he still cherished. He had been

warned of the approaching danger and exhorted to pray for strength; he had neglected the exhortation and, despite the warning, had placed himself in the occasion of sin. It was weakness in him who had boasted of his strength.

146. *The trial before Pilate*, John 18, 28-19, 16; Mark 15, 2-15; Luke 23, 1-25; Matt. 27, 11-26. Pilate held the office of Roman procurator of Judea from A.D. 26 to 36. In the trial of Jesus he showed the same characteristics that marked his administration throughout. Inclined to justice, he was full of inconsistencies, being sometimes rash, harsh, and cruel in his treatment of the Jews and at other times timid, cowardly, and fearful of his own safety. This resulted in almost continuous strife with the Jews; in these clashes Pilate was usually bold at the start, but was soon forced to yield. Shortly after taking charge of affairs, he sent a body of soldiers into Jerusalem at night, and the dawn revealed their idolatrous banners flying from the walls; this was a wanton sacrilege never attempted by his predecessors. In their dismay and helplessness the Jews sent a large delegation to Pilate at his headquarters in Cæsarea. For five days they stormed the procurator with petitions for the removal of the banners, and when at last, exasperated by their persistence, he ordered his legionaries to disperse the crowd by force, the Jews cast themselves down defenseless on the ground ready to die for their religion. Pilate had to choose between a wholesale slaughter and yielding, so he ordered the banners removed. Later on when he adorned his palace at Jerusalem with golden shields bearing the names of pagan gods, the protests of the people brought an order from the Emperor Tiberius to take them down. Again acting on the happy inspiration to improve the city's meager water supply, he rashly tried to seize the Temple revenues to finance the project; the consequent revolt had to be suppressed with considerable bloodshed. It was, then, with mutual feelings of hostility, contempt, and fear that Pilate and the Jewish rulers now faced each other.

A. **The malefactor**, John 18, 29-30. The Jews hoped to hurry Pilate into ratifying their death sentence, but with a Roman's sense of justice he demands according to Roman law that they lay a definite charge against Jesus. Resentfully they retort that they would not have presented Him unless He had been a malefactor.

B. **The king**, John 18, 33-38; Luke 23, 2-4. Forced to be more definite, they charge Him with claiming to be a king. Pilate asks Jesus if this is true. Before replying Jesus inquires in what sense Pilate understands the term "king." Does he ask the question as Roman procurator and with the intention of finding out whether Jesus claims a temporal, political kingdom, or have His enemies put the word on Pilate's lips so that he understands it as a claim to kingship in God's religious kingdom? Pilate answers impatiently, and conflicting sentiments tend to obscure his meaning. "I am not a Jew, but a Roman and as such I am primarily interested in the political sense of the charge, for if anyone sets himself up here as king, he is a threat to the Roman supremacy. I am not versed in the subtleties of your laws and customs; still as governor I must take cognizance of such matters when presented to me officially, and now Your supreme council has brought You to me with this charge. Hence in this sense also I inquire if You are a king; what have You done to cause the rulers to bring this charge against You?"

Jesus at once removes all fear or suspicion of Himself as an aspirant for political power. He lays no claim to an earthly kingdom and so He is not in conflict with the Roman dominion. He is a spiritual king, the head of a heavenly realm.

All suspicion of His threatening the authority of Rome having been allayed, Pilate decides at once that He is innocent. He is deeply impressed by our Lord's spiritual claims and so he asks, "Art Thou a king then?" "So You are a king, though not of an earthly kingdom." Jesus assures the

procurator that he has understood Him correctly and explains that the purpose of His coming into the world (through the Incarnation) is to bear testimony to the truth.

With dim memories of the endless disputes of philosophers on the abstract question of truth, Pilate feels that he is beyond his depth; this is perhaps some new philosophical-religious system, and such matters are of no interest to him. So he passes it off with the ironical question, "What is truth?" and goes out to announce to the Sanhedrists his decision that he finds no grounds for prosecution.

**C. The political agitator,** Luke 23, 5; Mark 15, 4-5; John 19, 4-6. Had it been a question of orderly legal proceedings, this should have ended the case. But (Luke 23, 5) the decision is received with clamorous protests and insistence on the charge of political sedition. To these outcries Jesus makes no reply (Mark 15, 4-5) so that Pilate is astonished, admiring His superhuman dignity and self-control in striking contrast with the passionate fury of His accusers.

Galilee is mentioned to show the extent of the unrest stirred up by Jesus, and Pilate uses this as an excuse to extricate himself from a situation that is becoming embarrassing. Since Jesus is a subject of Herod Antipas, he will send Him to Herod who had come to the city for the Pasch. But Herod quickly remands Him to Pilate after subjecting Him to mockery and covering Him with a white robe as a token that he considers Him harmless.

To justify his unwillingness to condemn Jesus, Pilate first appeals to Herod's decision as a confirmation of his own and then, in accordance with the custom of releasing a prisoner on the festival, offers the crowd a choice between Jesus and Barabbas in the hope that they will choose Jesus. This failing, He seeks some other means of escape and decides to scourge Jesus; this may satisfy their thirst for His blood and prove that he is not trying to represent them

as having condemned a man in no way guilty (Luke 23, 13-17).

After the scourging he brings Jesus out in the sight of all, trusting that they will be touched with pity when they see the awful state to which He has been reduced. Despite the bloodthirsty cries of the crowd, he again declares His innocence (John 19, 4-6).

D. **The blasphemer**, John 19, 7-12. Then the Jews advance their real accusation; He is guilty of blasphemy, and their law fixes the penalty of death for that crime. The Romans made it a practice to respect the laws of subject nations, but that they did not consider themselves bound to do so under all circumstances is proved by Pilate's conduct here and by the trial of St. Paul in Act. 25, 14-21. As a pagan, to whom stories of the gods in human form were familiar, Pilate is frightened by such a charge and asks Jesus about His origin. Our Lord's noble bearing and lofty answer render Pilate still more anxious to release Him, for he realizes that his present power carries with it tremendous responsibility.

E. **The king again**, John 19, 12-16. The Jews are now compelled to bring forward their last argument; it is a threat of accusation before the jealous Tiberius for releasing a rival of the Emperor. Pilate had already experienced their influence at Rome. This threat breaks down his power of resistance, and to shield himself he condemns Jesus to be crucified.

147. **The crucifixion**, John 19, 16-37; Mark 15, 20-41; Luke 23, 25-49; Matt. 27, 31-56.

A. **The cross**. There were three kinds of crosses in use for the execution of criminals among the Romans; the *crux recussata* in the form of an X, the *crux commissa* in the form of a T, and the *crux immissa* in which the vertical beam extended above the horizontal. Our Lord was crucified on a *crux immissa*; this seems evident from the place of the

"title" of the cross which was fastened above His head (Matt. 27, 37). About halfway up the vertical beam there was a projection forming a seat so that the weight of the person being executed would not have to be sustained entirely by the hands and feet.

B. **The manner.** Sometimes the condemned man was merely tied to the cross, but more often nails were driven through the hands and feet. That Jesus was nailed, not tied, to the cross is proved by the wounds in His hands and feet which He showed to the disciples after His resurrection (Luke 24, 39). From the most ancient representations of the crucifixion, as well as from the statements of the early Fathers, it is clear that each foot was nailed separately, and not both feet with one nail as they are now usually represented. The cross was generally set up in position first and the criminal then raised and secured by ropes while the nails were being driven in; this was probably the method followed in fastening our Lord to the cross, though sometimes the condemned man was nailed to the cross before it was set up. Before the execution the criminal was stripped of his clothes and these were divided among the executioners. The Romans probably made no concession to modesty, and so the criminal would be crucified naked; but since the Jews had more respect for human dignity, they forbade the stoning of a person without leaving him some part of his clothing and in all probability they insisted on the same decency in crucifixion even though the executioners were Romans. Hence, it seems likely that our Lord wore a loin cloth as He hung on the cross.

C. **The title.** Roman custom required that the charge on which the man had been condemned should be written on a tablet to be hung around his neck as he was led to execution; once written, it was forbidden to change even a single letter of this title since it really formed the official statement of the case. Different wordings for the title are given in the Gospels; this is explained on the supposition



either that some of the Evangelists give merely the substance of what was written, or that, as the title was in three languages, St. Matthew and St. Luke use the Greek form, St. Mark the Latin, and St. John the Aramaic.

**D. The drink of mercy.** It was customary among the Jews to offer the one about to be crucified a strong drink of vinegar and gall, or of wine mixed with gall or myrrh which would benumb his senses and render the tortures of crucifixion more endurable. The task of preparing this drink was assigned to the noble women of Jerusalem. Our Lord tasted this drink to show His appreciation of the humane intention of those who offered it, but He refused to drink it because He willed to suffer the fullness of His agony with mind and senses unimpaired.

**148. *The time of the crucifixion.*** According to the Synoptics, darkness prevailed from the 6th to the 9th hour and about the 9th hour Jesus died (Mark 15, 33; Luke 23, 44; Matt. 27, 45-50). According to St. John (19, 14), Jesus was condemned about the 6th hour. Since the Jews reckoned the time from sunrise and divided the daytime into twelve hours from sunrise to sunset, the 6th hour was about noon and the 9th hour about 3 p.m.

Some find a lack of harmony between the Synoptics and St. John on the supposition that St. John did not follow the Jewish reckoning but figured the time from midnight according to the Roman method; in this case his 6th hour would be about 6 a.m. If this were proved, harmony could be secured by assuming that although Pilate pronounced the sentence between 6 and 7 a.m., the preparations for the crucifixion took up the time till about 11 a.m., or that Jesus hung on the cross some hours before the darkness came, or finally that St. John refers to the beginning of the whole trial and not to the final sentence.

St. Mark also raises a difficulty by saying, "it was the third hour and they crucified Him" (15, 25). On the ordinary Jewish reckoning mentioned above, this would be about

9 a.m. But this can readily be brought into agreement with the statement that there was darkness during the three hours after noon and that Jesus died at 3 p.m.; for (1) as suggested in regard to St. John, St. Mark may imply that our Lord had been hanging on the cross some time before the coming of the darkness; or (2) St. Mark may refer to the beginning of the whole process of crucifixion from the moment when Pilate ordered Jesus to be scourged and so the interval between 9 a.m. and the actual crucifixion would be occupied by the scourging, the final condemnation, and the carrying of the cross to Calvary; or (3) St. Mark may be here following the Jewish custom of dividing the day-time into quarters called the 1st hour (6-9 a.m.), the 3rd hour (9-12 a.m.), the 6th hour (12 a.m.-3 p.m.), and the 9th hour (3-6 p.m.), and in this way the 3rd could be about 11-12 a.m.

149. *The seven words on the cross.* The Gospels tell us that Jesus spoke seven times while hanging on the cross. His words may be divided thus:

A. **Those referring to others** and spoken about the 6th hour (about noon):

1. "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23, 34);
2. "Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23, 43);
3. "Woman, behold thy son. . . . Behold thy mother" (John 19, 26.27);

B. **Those referring to Himself** and spoken about the 9th hour (about 3 p.m.):

4. "*Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani* . . . My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me" (Mark 15, 34; Matt. 27, 46);
5. "I thirst" (John 19, 28);
6. "It is consummated" (John 19, 30);
7. "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" (Luke 23, 46).

*The first word.* Hanging on the cross in terrible torment, Jesus intercedes with His heavenly Father for His executioners, giving a sublime example of love even for enemies and of burning zeal for the salvation of all men no matter how wicked. The ignorance of the Jews was not sufficient to excuse them from sin; they were sinning mortally; yet they were ignorant of the full extent of their crime in crucifying the God-man.

*The second word.* It is to St. Luke, characterized among the Evangelists for his care in recording examples of the universal mercy of Christ, that we are indebted for the incident of the good thief. St. John merely mentions that two thieves were crucified with Jesus; St. Matthew and St. Mark, after speaking of the insults hurled at the dying Savior by the priests, soldiers, and bystanders, add that those crucified with Him joined in reviling Him. It is possible that the good thief imitated his companion at first and then repented when he saw the superhuman patience of Jesus, but this is hardly probable in view of his unqualified reproaches to the other for having spoken insultingly of our Lord. It seems more probable that St. Matthew and St. Mark use the plural simply to designate a new set of those who insulted Jesus without affirming that the insulting remarks were made by both the individuals who made up this division.

Jesus assures the good thief that he will be with Him in Paradise that very day. Christ Himself was to be the first to enter heaven and that only at His ascension. Hence, what He here promises the good thief is admission to Limbo where the just awaited the opening of heaven. This place would be a real Paradise when the news of the completed redemption had been announced there by our Lord.

*The third word.* Near the cross were standing the Blessed Virgin, St. John, and the pious women. They were close enough to hear Jesus' voice, but still at a little distance since the immediate vicinity of the cross was occupied by the

soldiers and the others who were mocking the dying Savior. Despite the unspeakable sorrow filling her heart, the Blessed Virgin stood erect under this severe trial, giving an example of heroic fortitude; hence, the pictures representing her as fainting and being supported by her friends fail to do justice to her courage.

As death approaches, Jesus provides for His Mother, intrusting her to the love and care of His best-loved disciple, St. John, and enjoining them to look upon each other as mother and son. The sublime setting of this scene seems to exclude the idea that Jesus was thinking of nothing more than providing for the safety and consolation of His Mother and St. John; the beloved disciple rather represents the faithful followers of Christ, and Jesus declares that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the spiritual Mother of all.

*The fourth word.* This is an expression of the awful interior sufferings endured by Jesus in addition to, and partly in consequence of, His extreme physical torments. So great was the sorrow and desolation that overwhelmed His soul, that it seemed as though His heavenly Father had entirely abandoned Him.

*The fifth word.* Pain and the loss of blood contributed to make thirst one of the most cruel of all the tortures suffered by those crucified. Jesus, too, bore this torture and uttered this cry in fulfillment of the prophecies (Pss. 21, 16; 68, 22).

*The sixth word.* One of the guards raised to our Lord's lips a sponge moistened with vinegar; this was either the strong drink prepared for the condemned to deaden their sense of pain or the ordinary sour wine used by the Roman soldiers. Jesus exclaims that all is now ended; the Messianic work intrusted to Him by His Father and outlined in the prophecies has at last been completed.

*The seventh word.* Jesus at the moment of death commends His soul to the Father with a loud cry which marks at the same time His absolute trust in God and, since such

a cry was not natural under the circumstances (cf. Mark 15, 39), His complete mastery over the manner of His death (cf. John 10, 18).

150. *Miraculous events at the crucifixion*, Matt. 27, 51-54. From about noon till three o'clock there was an unnatural darkness over all the land (Matt. 27, 45). This may have been due to the gathering of dense black clouds excluding the sunlight or to a heavy fog; it could not have been an eclipse, for the Pasch occurred at the time of the full moon when an eclipse of the sun is impossible. The region covered by the darkness is of uncertain extent; the words "over the whole earth" need not be taken literally; it is enough that the portent was visible throughout Palestine or even merely in the neighborhood of Jerusalem.

At the moment of our Lord's death the veil of the Temple was rent in two from top to bottom (Matt. 27, 51). There were two veils in the Temple, an inner one between the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place, and an outer one between the Holy Place and the Court of the Israelites. Probably it is the inner veil that is here meant. Its rending was to indicate the end of the old forms of worship and the opening of the gates of heaven to all. There was an earthquake also which, as often happens at such times, caused great fissures to open in the earth. Since the Jews used caves or excavations in the rocks for burial purposes, this naturally affected many such tombs and so they were laid open.

After our Lord's resurrection many holy persons arose from the dead and appeared to many (Matt. 27, 51-53). It is not said that this resurrection took place on the day of the crucifixion; it was only after Christ's resurrection that these dead arose. Many interpretations have been given of the nature of the fact and of the subsequent lot of these persons. They arose as witnesses and manifestations of Christ's resurrection. Hence, theirs, too, must have been a true resurrection of the body; consequently, it cannot be held that, like the angels who sometimes appeared in human shape,

they had only apparent, not real bodies, nor that they came to life again in their mortal bodies like Lazarus when he was restored to life by Jesus. So the nature of the fact requires that they rose with spiritual bodies just as men will rise at the last judgment. No certain answer can be given the question regarding their subsequent lot; some think that after bearing witness to our Lord's resurrection they returned to the tomb, but the greater weight of opinion holds that they ascended as glorified bodies into heaven with our Lord at His ascension. Who these persons were, is unknown; as witnesses to the resurrection it seems they must have been known personally to those to whom they appeared, and so they could not have been dead many years. This, of course, excludes the patriarchs of the Old Testament and keeps this opinion from conflicting with St. Peter's statement that the body of David was still in the tomb after Christ's ascension (Act. 2, 27, 29).

151. *The burial of Jesus*, John 19, 39-42; Mark 15, 42-47; Luke 23, 50-56; Matt. 27, 57-66. Death was often slow in coming to the crucified; sometimes they lingered on for a whole day or even for two days. The Romans were not accustomed to shorten their pain, but left them to die of exhaustion or to be devoured by birds or dogs. But the Jews, in keeping with a precept of the law (Deut. 21, 23), took care that the crucified should be put out of his pain and buried the day of the crucifixion. On the present occasion there was the additional reason that the next day was the great festival of the Pasch and it seemed unbecoming to have this bloody spectacle marring the solemnity of the feast day. So they secured Pilate's permission to have the crucified dispatched before evening. The usual means employed was the breaking of their legs, and the soldiers did this to the two thieves, but when they came to Jesus, they found that He was already dead. Still to remove all doubt, one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear. As he drew the spear away, there followed a flow of blood and water;

natural explanations have been sought for this, but the common opinion is that it is beyond the laws of physiology, and the Fathers interpret it mystically as prefiguring the Church or the two great sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Eucharist.

After this, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for permission to bury the body of Jesus. Pilate had not yet been officially notified that Jesus was dead; perhaps he was not even aware that his order for the breaking of the legs had been already carried out. In any case, he summoned the centurion in charge of the execution and on learning from him that death had already intervened, he gave Joseph the desired permission.

The burial was conducted in the usual Jewish manner. Owing to the warm climate and the lack of embalming, the dead were buried on the very day of their death. The body was covered with sweet-smelling spices and wrapped in linen cloths. It was customary among the wealthy to have their tombs hewn out from some rocky hillside on their own property; in the large room thus constructed the walls were further cut in the form of shelves, and on these the bodies were deposited. The entrance to the tomb was low and narrow for the most part, so that it could be easily closed by rolling a heavy stone in front of it. Examples of such rock hewn tombs are still to be seen in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

In their anxiety to make their triumph secure, the rulers went to Pilate on Saturday with the request that a guard should be placed around the tomb to prevent the disciples from stealing the body and then pretending that Jesus had fulfilled His promise to rise from the dead. Pilate authorized them to use Roman soldiers for this purpose and to take whatever other precautions might seem necessary. They stationed a guard around the tomb and fastened the entrance stone in such a way that it could not be removed without breaking the seal placed upon it; this seal was

probably impressed upon the cement which was used to hold in place a rope stretched across the stone and fastened to the outer walls of the sepulcher.



## Chapter XXIII

### THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION

*Sources:* John 20, 1-23, Mark 16, 1-20; Luke 24, 1-53; Matt. 28, 1-15; Act. 1, 1-14.

152. *The resurrection.* Jesus rose from the dead without ostentation some time between midnight and the early dawn of Sunday morning. After His resurrection an earthquake shook the hill of Golgatha, and an angel descended from heaven to roll back the stone blocking the entrance to the tomb. On beholding this heavenly messenger, the guards were struck with mortal terror.

About the same time the pious women, not content with the hasty burial rites of Friday evening and apparently unaware of the measures taken by the rulers to seal and guard the tomb, approached with ointments for the body of Jesus. Astonished at seeing the stone rolled back from the entrance, they go into the vestibule of the tomb where they can see the place where the body had been laid; they are astounded to see that it is gone. Mary Magdalen, fearing that their enemies have violated the tomb, hastens to inform Peter and John of the removal of the body. As the other women linger there in helpless consternation, two angels appear to them, assure them of the resurrection of Jesus and dispatch them to bear the good news to the Apostles and to tell them that Jesus will appear again in Galilee.

On receiving the message of Mary Magdalen, Peter and John run to the sepulcher. John, arriving first, stops at the entrance, stoops to peer into the interior, and sees the burial cloths lying there; Peter boldly enters the tomb and finds the cloths neatly folded in two separate bundles. When they

have left, Mary Magdalen returns seeking a clue to the place to which the body has been removed. Jesus appears to her, but she thinks He is the gardener and begs Him to tell her, if He can, where the body of Jesus has been taken. When Jesus reveals Himself to her by calling her name, she falls down in adoration at His feet. He admonishes her not to cling to His feet as though He were about to leave her forever; He is not to ascend into heaven immediately, but He will ascend soon and she is to carry that message to His disciples. Then He disappears and she hastens to tell the disciples that she has seen the risen Lord; but they are not prepared to accept either her word or that of the other women.

Jesus does not reveal Himself again till the afternoon. Then He appears to two of the disciples, one of them being Cleophas, as they are walking in dejection toward Emmaus. Concealing His identity at first, He teaches them from Scripture that the passion was necessary in the designs of God. When they have reached their destination and are taking refreshment, He permits them to recognize Him "in the breaking of bread"; this phrase is taken by many to mean the Holy Eucharist, but it seems to indicate merely the ordinary meal. Overjoyed at the wonderful revelation, the two disciples hurry back to Jerusalem to communicate the news to the others; there they learn that meanwhile Jesus had appeared to Peter.

While the disciples are discussing these tidings and some continue in doubt, Jesus suddenly presents Himself to the group in the upper room where behind locked doors they are staying for fear of the Jews. Their first feeling is fright, for they think this may be a ghost. Jesus assures them there is no need for anxiety; He invites them to touch the scars in His hands and feet; this should dispel their doubts, for a ghost has not flesh and bones. Joy then succeeds fear, but so overwhelmingly that they can still scarcely believe it to be true; so Jesus calls for some food and eats it before their

eyes. Their faith being now unwavering, Jesus informs them that He is sending them forth into the world to teach, to forgive sins, etc., with the same power with which He has been sent by His Father. Then using a visible sign to express an effect not within the range of the senses, He breathes upon them and bestows upon them the Holy Ghost with the power to forgive sins in the sacrament of penance, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."

This is the last appearance of Jesus on Easter Sunday as recorded in the Gospels. No mention is made of His appearing to His Blessed Mother, but there can be no doubt that He appeared to her, and that before appearing to anyone else; this has always been the belief of Catholic commentators. Certainly this is only what would have been expected from the great love of Jesus for His Mother. Perhaps the Evangelists omit this because, their chief aim being to establish the truth of the resurrection, they felt that the testimony of a mother in such a case would have little weight with unbelievers.

153. *The women at the sepulcher*, John 20, 1-18; Mark 16, 1-11; Luke 24, 1-12; Matt. 28, 1-10. Since here, as throughout the Gospels, no one of the Evangelists undertakes to give all the details, their accounts must be pieced together to get the complete narrative. For the most part this can be done satisfactorily, but naturally some particulars can be determined only by conjecture, and hence various combinations of the events have been suggested.

The pious women who set out early Sunday morning to anoint the body of Jesus were Mary Magdalen, Mary the mother of James the Less or the "other Mary," Salome the mother of James the Greater and John, Joanna the wife of Chusa, and some companions. Of these St. Matthew mentions only Mary Magdalen and the "other Mary"; St. Mark adds Salome and calls this "other Mary" Mary the

mother of James; St. Luke omits Salome and adds Joanna and "the other women"; St. John confines his account to Mary Magdalen. No difficulty attaches to the persons concerned; one Evangelist merely cites more or fewer than another according to his purpose; but the difficulty arises in the accounts of the experiences of these women.

According to St. Matthew, on their arrival at the tomb in the early morning, the women see an angel sitting on the stone, are told of Christ's resurrection, and ordered to report to the disciples that the risen Lord will appear to the disciples in Galilee. As they hasten away to deliver this message, Jesus appears to them and repeats the command already given by the angel. St. Mark's account is quite similar, but he omits the appearance of Jesus to the women and pictures them as returning from the sepulcher in such fear that they did not dare to tell the news to anyone; he adds, however, that Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalen and that she brought the news to the disciples. According to St. Luke the women saw no one at first and then beheld two angels who announced that Jesus had risen as He had foretold; the women return and spread the news among the disciples. St. John, speaking only of Mary Magdalen, says it was still dark when she came to the sepulcher; as soon as she saw the stone had been rolled away, she ran to tell Peter and John; then she returned to the sepulcher and as she peered into it through her tears, she saw two angels who asked the reason for her weeping; as she turned back, Jesus appeared to her.

The differences in these accounts may be overcome by supposing that the women went to the tomb in two or more groups. One group saw only one angel, while another saw two; one group returned to the city in fear and kept silent, while another saw the risen Savior and went back with joy to tell the news. Mary Magdalen may have been alone from the beginning, or she may have separated herself from the others as soon as she saw the open sepulcher. The

difference in time in the expressions "very early . . . the sun being now risen" (Mark 16, 2) and "when it was yet dark" (John 20, 1) may be explained by supposing that it was dark when they set out and light at their arrival at the tomb, or by taking both expressions as equivalent to the early dawn when the twilight can be called indifferently light or darkness; it is helpful to remember that in Palestine the period of twilight is much shorter than with us.

On the supposition that the women all went to the tomb together, the reconciliation may be made by considering that Mary Magdalen returned to the city at the first sign that the tomb was empty, that some of the others went back in fear after the appearance of the first angel, and that the rest remained and saw two angels and later Jesus Himself. Or if Mary Magdalen alone left before Jesus appeared, then some of the women were too frightened to carry the news, while the others did so with joy.

Many think that the appearance of our Lord to the women in Matt. 28, 9-10 is the same as that in Mark 16, 9-11 and John 20, 11-18 where our Lord is described as appearing to Mary Magdalen. St. Matthew's account is very concise and so may admit a rather free interpretation, but it seems too much to say that he here uses the plural for the singular and attributes to all the women what happened to Mary Magdalen alone. Perhaps, if the two appearances are to be taken as one, our Lord revealed Himself first to Mary Magdalen and then to the others while she was still present.

154. *The later appearances.*

A. **In Jerusalem,** John 20, 24-29. The Apostle Thomas was not present when our Lord appeared to the assembled disciples on Easter Sunday, and he refused to accept their word that they had seen Him in the flesh. A week later Jesus appears again when Thomas is with them and invites the doubting Apostle to satisfy himself by touching the scars of His wounds. Thomas at once professes his faith and Jesus, while praising him for at last yielding to evi-

dence, pronounces those even more blessed who accept the truth through faith alone.

**B. At the Sea of Galilee, John 21, 1-25.** After this appearance to Thomas, the disciples returned to Galilee to receive our Lord's further commands. Jesus appeared to some of them while they were engaged in their old occupation as fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. Five of those present were Apostles—Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James the Greater, and John; the other two are mentioned as disciples, but perhaps they also were Apostles. It was early morning and during the whole night their fishing had been unsuccessful. When Jesus addresses them from the shore, they do not recognize Him; but when at His command they cast the net again and take a great quantity of fish, John cries out that it is the Lord. At the word, Peter seizes the upper garment which he had thrown aside while working and dives into the water to swim ashore; the others follow more slowly in the boat dragging the net with the fishes.

In his thoughtfulness Jesus had fire and food prepared to cheer them after their labor. Then He orders them to draw in the net; when the fish are safely landed, He joins them in their meal. He then gives Peter a chance to repair his triple denial of Him by a triple profession of his love, and three times He commissions him to take supreme charge of His Church. After thus conferring the Primacy on Peter, Jesus foretells his martyrdom by crucifixion. The command to follow Him meant both a physical and moral following; Jesus walks away from the group and desires Peter to follow Him in token of His future following of Him along the way of the cross. Peter, looking back at John, asks our Lord what fate is in store for the beloved disciple. Jesus refuses to satisfy his curiosity; if He should wish that John should live till His second coming, it would be no concern of Peter's. The Evangelist is careful to add that Jesus did not say that he would not die nor that he would live till Christ's second coming, but that He simply put the supposition; St.

John also notes that this was the third appearance of Jesus to His assembled Apostles.

**C. On a mountain in Galilee,** Mark 16, 15-18; Luke 24, 44-49; Matt. 28, 16-20. If, as seems probable, this is the same appearance as that mentioned in 1 Cor. 15, 6, then there were more than 500 disciples assembled. As on other occasions, Jesus was not fully recognized at first and so "some doubted." Addressing the Apostles, our Lord, after asserting that He possesses all power in heaven and on earth, commissions them, in virtue of this power, to make disciples among all nations by preaching the Gospel to them and baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. This is a clear enunciation of the Holy Trinity, setting forth the unity of the divine essence and the distinction of the three Persons. By itself the text does not necessarily imply that these exact words are to constitute the form of the Sacrament of Baptism, but that they do give that form is established from tradition. Mere Baptism is not enough; men are to be taught to observe all that Jesus has commanded the Apostles. Here again there is evident the establishment of a living teaching body in the Church and the promulgation of a definite set of doctrines necessary for salvation. The work of the Apostles, through their successors, is to continue till the consummation of the world, till the end of time, and is to have Christ's continuous assistance guaranteeing its successful accomplishment. The Apostles themselves are promised special gifts, the "charismata," including the power of miracles and of speaking various languages. Soon they will receive the Holy Ghost in a visible manner.

155. *The ascension*, Mark 16, 19-20; Luke 24, 50-53; Act. 1, 1-14. Jesus appeared at intervals to His disciples during a period of forty days after His resurrection. They had remained in Jerusalem for about a week and had then gone to Galilee. Toward the end of the forty days they had been told to return to Jerusalem to await the coming of the Holy

Ghost. There Jesus appeared to them for the last time. Even at that late date they were still occupied with thoughts and hopes of a kingdom of worldly power and splendor, and so they eagerly ask Him if the time has not at length arrived for the establishment of this kingdom, for the restoration of the long-lost national supremacy of Israel. Patiently Jesus raises their thoughts to a spiritual level and impresses upon them the importance of the great supernatural work they are about to undertake. The Father will manifest His power when He sees fit; their work is to coöperate with His designs. As a preparation for this work they will receive the power of the Holy Ghost; with this supernatural strength they will then preach the Gospel in Jerusalem, the center of Jewish religious life, and later throughout Judea, Samaria, and the whole earth.

Leading them out of the city and across the brook Cedron, He conducted them up to the slopes of the Mount of Olives in a southeasterly direction toward Bethany. On or near the summit of the mountain He halted them, raised His hands in benediction, and before their astonished gaze rose gradually from the earth, mounting higher and higher till a cloud hid Him from their sight.

As they stood straining their eyes to catch a last glimpse of Him, two angels appeared to assure them that Jesus had ascended into heaven to take possession of His eternal throne; it would be vain for them to remain there expecting to see Him again; at the proper time He would return with supernatural power as they had just beheld Him ascending to heaven.

After bowing down in adoration of their ascended Savior, they returned to Jerusalem, their sorrow at losing the visible presence of Jesus being swallowed up in their joy at this latest manifestation of His glory. Prayer in the Temple and in the upper room where the Apostles dwelt together, occupied the time till the coming of the Holy Ghost, and then they went forth preaching the Gospel everywhere and confirming their doctrine with miracles.



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